

# (The Head Covering) 09 - 1 Corinthians 11:16 and Answers to the Cultural Argument

by Tom Chaplin

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*Tom Chaplin's sermon explores the cultural and scriptural implications of head coverings as discussed in 1 Corinthians 11:16.*

**Duration:** 54:26

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:24, Matthew 5:18, Matthew 19:1-6, 1 Corinthians 11:16

**Topics:** "Head Covering"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the history of creation and the analogies between the relationships of God to Christ, Christ to man, and man to woman. He argues that these relationships have not changed and are still applicable today. The preacher also addresses the idea of being convinced and poses the question of what if someone still has doubts. He then introduces a theologian named R.C. and suggests that his teachings will be the subject of the sermon. The preacher concludes by asking for God's guidance and emphasizing the importance of true spiritual thoughts.

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## Transcript

Well, we'll begin today by returning to 1 Corinthians chapter 11. This is our ninth study on the subject of the head covering, the whole Bible approach. I believe this is the next to the last.

I think next week will be our final lesson on this subject. But today we want to accomplish two things. We've looked at 1 Corinthians chapter 11 verses 1 through verse 15.

We have only one verse left, verse 16, to actually finish up the section in this chapter dealing with the head covering. So we want to do that first and finish our exposition of the text. And then we want to go and look at a subject that really is broader and encompasses the whole issue.

We want to return again to the cultural argument. We addressed that issue in broad terms and general terms. I think it was in our second lesson.

But now we want to look at the cultural argument tonight as it specifically relates to 1 Corinthians chapter 11. And we have a lot to say about that. And I think you'll find it very interesting.

So that'll be our subject matter for today. But before we do get into it again, let's ask the Lord's blessing on our time. Father, once again we come before you acknowledging our weakness and our inability.

We know, Lord, that all truth is spiritually discerned. And we know, Father, how easy it is for the flesh to grip our minds and cloud our thinking. And I would just pray that you would help us all, Lord, to have true spiritual thoughts today as we look at this passage.

Lord, may the teaching that's given be truly by thy Spirit. May it not originate from any fleshly desires or tendencies in my own life or heart. Just pray that what is said and what is given to be received will truly be a reflection of your word and what it has for us.

And that you would just open all our hearts to receive it. Lord, correct us where we're in error and establish us in your truth. We'd ask this in Jesus' name and for his sake.

Okay, 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 16 will be the first verse we'll look at, first subject. But before we do, let me go ahead and once again read the passage in its entirety, beginning in verse 1. 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 unto you.

But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth 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.

For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. 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. 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.

Judging 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. And here's our verse for today. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

Now he's finished his exposition. He's given his arguments. When he comes to verse 16, he is addressing the possibility that perhaps somebody that is listening to him or reading this letter might not agree with him.

And so he finishes up addressing that possibility in verse 16. And basically, I believe there are three interpretations. At least there are three interpretations that as I have studied this passage and as I've talked to others that I have run across.

And so we'll look at these three possible interpretations. And what I'll do is I'll start with what at least I consider the least likely. And then we'll work our way down to the third interpretation, which I consider to be the proper interpretation, the most likely understanding of the passage.

As I said, there are three possibilities. And in the first one, a lot in this interpretation depends on how you interpret the word custom in this verse. Paul says, but if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom.

Well, what is this custom he's referring to? Now in this first interpretation, people interpret it as referring to the custom of wearing the head covering. Okay? And if I could paraphrase how it is understood, this verse that is, it would be this way. If you don't, if you don't have the head covering.

Now, I've actually been discussing with a very solid pastor. I mean, that was the interpretation that he took of this verse. That when it says we have no such custom, he literally meant that if you're inclined to be contentious, if you don't agree with it, then we don't have the custom of wearing the head covering.

And they understood it as being in that way. And we might guess you could say, well, Paul's just saying this isn't an issue worth fighting over. And so if you're going to disagree with me, just forget it.

You know, don't, just let's don't even, this issue really isn't worth fighting over. Just forget the whole matter if we're going to have contention over it. And that is a, that's a possible way of understanding this verse.

Well, let me give you some of my thoughts on that as to why I have struggles with that understanding. Because it seems to me that if this is the proper way to understand this verse, then Paul, at least to me, would seem to have somewhat of a split personality. Because when you look at what he said before this verse, he speaks in very strong terms.

Consider verses four through six. Let's, let's look at Ben just for a second. And consider how forcefully he's speaking.

He says, 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. But if the woman be not covered, let her be shorn.

But if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. I mean, Paul here is speaking very emphatically, isn't he? Very forcefully. He's not wishy-washy.

He's saying whatever this is, it's very important that we're right on it. And he gives some very strong directives. If you're not covered and you refuse to be covered, then you need to have your head shaved.

That's not wishy-washy. I mean, that's, that's very forceful argument. Now how can we reconcile that with the idea that now that he's made all these forceful comments, these very strong directives, then we come to this last verse and he says, oh, well, if you disagree with me, it really doesn't matter.

Let's just drop the issue, basically. Does that seem reasonable to you? To me, it's, it's like the verse, the first 15 verses are pitted against the last verse and we've got Scripture pitted against Scripture. We can't, how can we have Paul very forceful in 1 through 15 and then suddenly become wishy-washy and he says it doesn't matter when clearly up to that point it does.

So at least from my perspective, if you start from the presupposition that Scripture doesn't contradict Scripture and Paul didn't have a split personality, then that interpretation is very unsatisfying. And from my

perspective, I don't think it really is the proper way to understand this verse. And we don't have to understand it that way.

The second understanding of this verse is much better and much more plausible. Now, in this understanding of the verse, the word custom is not used to refer to or seem to refer to the head covering. It seemed to refer to being contentious.

In other words, he's looking at contentiousness and saying, we don't have that custom. We don't have the custom of being contentious. So he says, if you understand it that way, if I can paraphrase it, give my own understanding, he is saying, if you're inclined to be contentious, that's not acceptable behavior.

We don't have that custom. Either with Paul, with me or the other churches, we just are not contentious over matters. Now that's a much more satisfying and reasonable interpretation of this passage, in my opinion.

But I still have some difficulties with it. And it's based on the Greek meaning of the word custom and how it's used in other scriptures. Look for a second at John chapter 18 in verse 39.

This will give you an example of how this word is used in other instances in the Bible. I'll start in verse 38. Pilate saith unto him, what is true? And when he had said that, he went out again unto the Jews and saith unto them, I find no fault in at all.

I find in him no fault at all. So this is at the time right before Christ is going to be given over to be crucified to the crowd. In verse 39, Pilate says, but ye have a custom.

And it's the same word used in 1 Corinthians chapter 11. Ye have a custom that I should release unto you one at the Passover. Will ye therefore that I release unto you the king of the Jews.

And so you see that the usage of this word custom, to my knowledge, there's no place in scripture where it's referred to just what we would call a moral flaw. Okay, it's literally a tradition that people practice like a festival. In this case, the governor every year let a prisoner go.

That was what type of custom is being referred to in the usage of that word. But we got to kind of use the word in a different way than it normally is in this passage and we refer to contentiousness because there Paul is saying a moral flaw is a custom. And it doesn't exactly fit the meaning of the word custom.

So that's one difficulty, though I don't totally rule out the possibility of that. I mean, maybe. But to me, the best understanding and the most likely, the most satisfying understanding is the third one.

And in this interpretation again, we use the same understanding as in the first interpretation, namely that the custom being referred to is the custom of wearing the head covering. So when Paul says, but if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God. What he is saying is this.

If you have a different custom than what we have been teaching and are inclined to be contentious, we don't recognize your custom, nor do the churches of God. And that would be the sense of the verse with that understanding. So he's looking at this man and seeing him as having a contentious spirit and realizing he's being contentious because he's holding to some custom that is different from the one Paul is teaching.

And considering that and understanding that, he says, if you're inclined to be contentious, we don't have your custom, nor do the churches of God. Whatever your different custom is concerning wearing the head covering. The reason I prefer this understanding of the verse is because it fits best with the normal meaning of the word custom.

Because how you wear a head covering was a custom. The Greeks had a custom. Paul speaks in the first few verses here.

He says, now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the ordinances. Well, that word can also be legitimately translated traditions or the customs even. So when you look at the passage and you see the meaning of the word and that's what it means, and you see that the only tradition or custom that Paul is speaking of in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 is the tradition of the head covering.

And if you see that this understanding of the verse doesn't give Paul a schizophrenic personality that allows him to be totally consistent in his approach to this verse or this issue of the head covering from verses 1 through the end of the section, to me this is the most reasonable understanding of that verse. And that's the way I understand it. Any questions on that? All right, well, let's go ahead then and look at what the bulk of our teaching today will be concerned with, namely the cultural argument.

I think I left one of my overheads downstairs. To begin with, though, let's review. I believe it was the second lesson that we looked at this subject in general terms, and I'm not going to really recapitulate or rehash everything that we looked at in the second lesson, but let's just briefly list the points that we tried to make, I think, you know, in the second lesson.

Number one, in regards to the cultural argument, the view that we can choose not to obey one of God's commands because it was given in a different cultural setting than our own, we noted that that was contrary to Matthew 5:17 and other scriptures which teach the usefulness and binding character of all God's commands throughout all ages. I believe very firmly that in light of scriptures like 2 Timothy 3:16, all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and where Jesus himself said that not one jot or tittle shall pass until all be fulfilled, and he commands even obedience to the very least of his commandments in that very same context, to me tells me the frame of mind I need to have when I come to scripture. I need to have the frame of mind that what the scriptures contains is for me, that God put it there for me, even though he gave it to Moses or he gave it to Jesus or he gave it to Paul or he gave it to Abraham, it's there to teach me.

Now that's not to say there isn't discontinuity, but in light of the principles we just considered, we need to be looking for God to tell us where that discontinuity is, and when he tells us there is differences, that things have changed, yes, we need to take heed of that, but if he doesn't tell us things are changed, we really don't have a right to change them or to say we don't have to do these things or to nullify these things on our own. We need some type of biblical direction from the Holy Spirit before we start setting aside God's commandments, and I think that's a real problem in modern day 20th century. There is not a, especially in America and in the West, there is a tendency to want to say, and it has to do with dispensational theology, and I don't know if that's a familiar term to you, but, and it's very prominent, especially even in Dallas, because we have a seminary that is a leading seminary on that issue, but very common to try and want to pit the Old Testament against the New or to say things have changed and so certain scriptures don't have anything to say to us anymore, and so there is a mentality that rather than looking for continuity is expecting discontinuity, and I think that is a wrong approach to scripture.

I think we should anticipate and expect continuity and let God tell us where to see the discontinuity. It's a whole different, it's kind of an attitude you have towards scripture, and if you're looking for reasons not to obey, then the easiest way to do it is to say, well, that's not for us today, and we don't want to have that type of attitude, and if you take our Lord's approach and Paul's approach that all scripture is given to us by God to help us, then that'll keep you from that type of mentality and keep us from making some mistakes in biblical interpretation. So anyway, that's one principle we discussed.

Another thing that we saw by way of review is that since all scriptural commands are culturally bound, this method of interpretation must inevitably lead one to the conclusion that we can know nothing or practically nothing of ethics with any degree of certainty. Instead of giving life, the scriptures become a hazy, uncertain beacon, unable to guide us through the difficulties of life. This also is contrary to scripture's testimony of itself in 2 Timothy 3, 16-17, but do you see how that could be? Every single scripture was given in a cultural context.

I mean, every single one of them, the commandments regarding an issue like marriage, homosexuality, you name it, they're all given to a certain people at a certain time in a certain place, and we can easily, and it's been done to just about every commandment in scripture, somebody has said that's cultural, it doesn't apply to me today. And if that's the case, and we are willing to accept that approach to scripture, we really can't know for certain what anything means, because we always have this doubt in the back of our minds that maybe this is cultural, and maybe it doesn't apply to me. And we can find some theologian that will give us a reason for that, believe me, especially if there's something you don't want to do.

You can always find a theologian that will give you a reason culturally why you don't have to do it. And that's very dangerous. And again, I think, as I'm pointing out, culture in and of itself cannot be used to set aside God's commandments.

Only a clear word from God can do that. I believe if we take that as an anchor, it'll keep us from much error. If we ask God to give us those exceptions, if we ask him to show us where the discontinuities are, and if that's all we'll, that's all we'll accept, is those things that we can actually see something in scripture where God says, this is changed.

And if we restrict ourselves to that, then we'll be safe from many errors in biblical interpretation, I believe. Does this, I mean, does this make sense? Otherwise, if you're determining where it's cultural, and if you're determining where it's changed, then who then becomes the judge of right and wrong? Is it God and his Holy Spirit anymore? No, it's you. You suddenly become God, in a real sense.

But I don't think that's the way it should be. I think God needs to be over us, telling us what's right and wrong, not us, the other direction. And the final point that we made was that the burden of proof always rests upon the one wishing to set aside the commandment, not the one who would assert its relevance.

In other words, if I stand before you and I say, this commandment is for today, the burden of proof is not on me to convince you of that. If you disagree with me, you've got to have a very strong case to say you're wrong, Tom. Okay? I mean, if all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and it's profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, and it says all scripture, and somebody wants to set aside part of that all scripture, well, obviously, the burden of proof rests upon him to justify why he wants to do that.

I just believe the scripture says all scripture. And that's how I take it. I just believe what the Bible says.

And if you want to assert an exception, you need to have a good case for that. Okay? Okay, those are some of the things we talked about in lesson two. Well, now we want to come back to 1 Corinthians chapter 11.

Now, everything we've said so far can apply to any issue. But you know, some issues are harder than others. Because if you have a commandment in scripture, and it's just a commandment, and there's no explanation given, there's more room for debate as to whether or not it's for today or not for today, or if it's culturally bound or whatever.

But interestingly enough, when you come to a passage in an issue like the head covering in 1 Corinthians 11, you've got an awful lot of information. You've got an awful lot of added detail to help us to know how we should take it. And that's why I think I said last week something to the effect that I just couldn't understand how anybody could explain this passage away culturally.

And I want to be open to correction. But I still, I am still of that mind, and I might as well tell you that I told my wife, I said, you need to pray for me that I don't get too exuberant on this subject. Because I will tell you right off the bat that I do not understand how anybody can explain this away culturally.

I really don't. But now I'm going to show you why, or tell you why. Number one reason, or first reason, as I've looked at this passage, it's very hard to understand the amount of instruction that is given to us by the Apostle Paul on this issue in relation to the amount of instruction he gives on other issues of clothing, if in fact we're just dealing with a cultural issue.

For instance, concerning the covering of your body proper, how much scripture is there in the New Testament related to that, that you can think of? Okay, two places, in Timothy and Peter, basically the same statements, that a woman is not to dress with braided hair, or gold or pearls, or costly or other. That is the total amount of instruction in the New Testament that I'm aware of, unless I perhaps missed something, that has anything to tell you about how your, the covering of your body proper is to be. A few words, that's it.

Yet I don't know of any conservative Christians anyway that would say that is a cultural issue. They would say that is something that's for us today. Very little information, but because it's with something over, concerning an issue that we all agree on, we don't challenge it.

But now you take an issue like that and compare it to the amount of time and exposition that is given to the head covering, and how can you explain that in terms of the head covering being cultural? There is no item of women's apparel in scripture for which there is more time devoted in discussion than the head covering. That to me is somewhat inconsistent with the idea that the issue is inherently a matter of indifference to God, it's a matter of culture. I would think if something was inherently a matter of indifference to God that it would get very little billing, very little discussion, whereas compared to other items of clothing, the head covering is the most extensively discussed.

That's my first concern. Let's go on down here to the second reason. We need to know that the same argument that's used in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 to justify the head covering, now what is that? You remember? It says Christ, or God is the head of Christ, Christ is the head of man, and man is the head of woman.

Now if we were to go, and we've already done this exercise once before, but look in 1 Peter chapter 3 for just a second. 1 Peter chapter 3. Likewise, now look how this passage starts. Likewise, you wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if they obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of their wives, while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear, whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, or wearing of gold, or putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart in 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. What is the same principle in Peter that we find in Corinthians? It's the chain of command. Now I don't know of any conservative Christians that would say that the passage we just read in Peter, and where Peter says you shouldn't wear fancy array and whatever, was cultural.

Now they might disagree on how we should understand that, but they would still say that that instruction concerning women's modesty is for today. Likewise when we went back to Timothy, we'd have the same same type of instruction, and I think all conservative Christians would say no that's not cultural, that's for today. Now we may disagree on how what it means, but we'll still say that those passages are for today.

But you'll notice that in both those instances the underlying principle is the God's chain of command. Now how can we look at Timothy and Peter and say that's for today, realizing that the principle is God's chain of command, then come to Corinthians where the same principle is God's chain of command, and say the head covering is cultural. How can we do that? To me if we're going to take that approach, we've got to say that Timothy and Peter are also cultural, in which case there's no instruction in the New Testament regarding modesty.

Now to some liberals they would like that conclusion, but I trust that my audience here today would have a lot of struggles with that just like I do. Okay, so it proves too much. If Corinthians is cultural, so are these other passages, because the same principles underlie them both, underlie them all.

Okay, that's my second concern. Now let's go to the third concern that I have, and it's this. The overall structure of Paul's argument is hard to understand if he is dealing with a cultural issue.

And what I'm saying here is that what the structure should be, it isn't, if Paul is dealing with a cultural issue. Now let me explain what I mean by that. The first thing we need to know is that, when you think about this, follow me, if something is being explained away on the basis of culture, isn't the underlying assumption that that issue is itself a matter of indifference, right? In other words, if something is a cultural issue, say the head covering, then God really doesn't care whether or not a woman's head is covered.

That's a matter of indifference. It just happens that in the Greek culture, that they had an understanding that it was necessary, and that's why it's significant, and that's why it was significant in the first second centuries. But we're not in the Greek culture, and we know better.

We know that the head covering really doesn't mean anything to God, and it just had a meaning because the Greeks gave it a meaning. But now we're in the 20th century, all that's changed, and we don't even wear long hair anymore. We don't, you know, we cut it short, and we certainly don't wear anything on our heads normally.

So we're in a different culture, and so it doesn't have the same meaning, and it doesn't relate to us. Isn't that basically the way you would argue? So fundamental to cultural argument is society that whatever issue you're dealing with is a matter of indifference. God really doesn't care one way or the other whether you have something on your head.

Well, okay, let's start out with umption. Surely wouldn't Paul have known that? He would have known that as far as God was concerned, the head covering was a matter of indifference to God, wouldn't he? Don't you think? You know, in Corinthians, it's Paul deals with some other issues that truly are matters of indifference. See how he deals with those matters.

Look in Corinthians chapter 8, just turn back a couple of pages. This is where he gives instruction between virgins and marriage, beginning in verse 25. Oops, maybe it's 7. Yeah, chapter 7. As now concerning virgins, I know commandment of the Lord.

Now notice he's saying, I don't have any moral principle which to guide me. He acknowledges it. He doesn't have a commandment.

Yet I judgment as one that hath tamed the mercy of the Lord to be faithful. I suppose therefore that this is the present distress. I say that it is good for a man so to be.

Art thou bound unto a wife not to be loosed? Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not so virgin Mary, she hath sinned. Nevertheless, such shall have trouble in the flesh, but I spare you.

Now see here in this instance where Paul is dealing with a matter that he knows is a matter of indifference. God, it's no issue whether you marry or not. So he's giving wisdom instruction here, just practical instruction guidance.

But he's not telling his Corinthians on this issue that this is a matter of ethics. This is a matter of right and wrong. And he makes that pretty clear.

So they have no doubt in their minds that it's not wrong to not to marry, but it might be wise for me not to marry under certain conditions. But they know it's a matter of with a matter of command, makes that plain. Paul's a careful theologian.

He doesn't want some people. Let's look at one other instance. Look at how he deals with meat sacrifice to idols just just right over in 1 Corinthians 8. He says, Now as things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge.

Knowledge puffeth up the charity. And if any man think that knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing, yet as he ought to know. They love God the same as know him.

As concerning, therefore, the eating of those things that are offered unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world and that there is none other God but one. Tom, we know that this isn't does any real significance to God. He's making it plain.

For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, and as there be many, or be gods many and as many, but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all. And we in him, and Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. How is not in every man that knowledge? For some

with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as they think an idol, and their conscience being weak is defiled.

But meet us not to God, neither if we eat are we the better, neither if we eat not are we the worse. For now in verse 9, But take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumble to them that are weak. For if any man see thee, which hath knowledge, sit at meat in the idol, shall the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are idols.

And through thine eyes shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died. When ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. In verse 13, He said, Therefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

And I hope reading that was not too tedious for you, but I hope you noticed that, and what I want you to see is how Paul really with an issue he knows is a matter of indifference. Meat offered the idol, thought it was really important, or thought it was really being done, he knows it's not. He had wisdom to know that this was truly a matter of indifference to God.

And in his exposition it makes that perfectly plain. But he says, Even so, if meat makes me offend, I'll not eat any meat. Okay.

It's plain that it's a matter of indifference, but other forces such as the conscience of a weak brother tell you not to engage in this practice for his sake. See how Paul deals with this matter. There's no doubt that it's a matter of liberty.

Now, this is a similar situation of in fact issue of the head covering this rule. If that's true, then Paul, unless he was not aware of that fact, knew that to God the head cover had no significance. And that it only had significance because you had these weaks who had given it significance that it didn't really have in God's mind.

And they had weak conscience. But what I would suggest really was the case, Paul would have written 1 Corinthians 11 something like that, put up here on the overhead. He said, Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

I praise you, brethren, that you remain in all things and keep the ordinances as I deliver them to you. Know that the covering head is inherently a matter of indifference to God. But because the man counts it to be a symbol of section, you should respect what is right in the sight of all men.

Be uncovered, the women covered. It is particularly good to observe local customs on the teaching of God as the system does. You get this.

Out in light of the way we see Paul dealing with cultural issues, that in fact covering is just cultural and has an indifference to it, Paul would have written 1 Corinthians 11 something like that. Okay? Any comments on that? Does that seem reasonable? Kind of thinking I can tell. Okay, well, if you have any questions later, don't hesitate to ask me.

But it's just not written you would expect it. Unless you think Paul didn't realize himself that he didn't, he himself thought it was moral principle and didn't know it was just. But I'm not, I can't accept that myself.

Okay, the overall structure just isn't what you would expect if the issue in 11 is cultural. But there are some other things we need to consider. Evidence in the passage itself suggests that Paul had to understand that was to be restrictive in regards to time.

If you look at verse 2, where Paul says, now I praise you, but you remember me in all things, the ordinances as I delivered them to you, as I think I mentioned, that word paradosis is the Greek word. It is a, it comes from, means transmission. In other words, I praise you, brethren, that you repeat the transmissions.

And if you look in Vine's Expository Dictionary, this word paradosis as being a handing down. In scripture, you can look in 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 18. For as much as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, persecution received by your mission from your fathers.

So in this verse, you see that this word handed down came to them from their fathers. In Matthew, the Lord uses the same term. In other words, the Pharisees, a discussion with our Lord.

And the Pharisees said, why did I decide the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread. So the word was that teaching handed down from the ancient Jewish sages. And so the ordinance, as it's translated in Corinthians, has this idea of a teaching of long standing down.

And so you see that's the terminology that Paul said. He praises them holding to the traditions. And it's not to be just for them, it's something that you have in mind that's going to last and it's going to be handed down from generation to generation.

And the way Paul uses that term, starting out 1 Corinthians 11, that he really doesn't understand his giving to the Corinthians instruction that is just meant for them and their generation. This instruction is being traditions, things that are going to form a teaching that's going to be handed down from generation to generation. So I don't think even Paul had it in him that he would expect that back and think that this wasn't for us.

It's a tradition. We can also look at this passage and see that evidence did not intend us to understand that this instruction was to be restricted in relation. Back to where Paul said in verse 16, but if any man seem to be accustomed, neither does of God.

And so what Paul is saying, this custom that we're teaching you is exactly what all the other churches in Christianity practice. Now, whatever part of the world, wherever there was a church, and certainly not every church was in the Greek culture like it was in Corinth. Whatever culture you found a church, Paul says, what I'm teaching you here is what we practice.

So from the very passage itself, it does not appear that Paul has in mind that we should restrict his teaching either as to time or location. Next thing I want to point out is this. The actual arguments he uses are inconsistent with a cultural type restriction.

What's the first argument? Well, he refers to God's chain of command, doesn't he? Where does he get that? Where do we get that? You know, verse 3 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. Then we look at verse 7 through 9, and Paul says in those verses, 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. Now, all these principles that he's laying out here, where did he get them? Well, they came right out of Genesis chapter 1 and 2, didn't they? This whole creation order is the first, and I would say the foremost, argument that Paul puts forth to teach us why a woman should cover her head. Well, you know, you see this same type of argument in other places of Scripture.

Look, again, in 1 Timothy chapter 2 for just a second. Now, I'm not going to read the whole thing, because we've read it, I don't know how many times in the course of this study, but again, it's that passage where a woman should dress modestly, and men should pray everywhere, but then you go down in verse 11 of chapter 2, and he says, let the women learn in silence with all subjection that I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve, and Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

So, just like in 1 Corinthians, where Paul goes back to foundational moral truth established in Genesis 1 and 2, when we come to 1 Timothy and he's talking about church order and the fact that women should be silent and they should dress a certain way, he goes right back to Genesis 1 and 2. Consider also Matthew chapter 19, verses 1 through 6, and it came to pass that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee and came into the coast of Judea, beyond Jordan, and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them there. The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him and saying unto him, is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, now notice where he go, have you not read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said for this cause shall a man leave father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain but one flesh, but therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. So here we go, Jesus himself in laying out the principles of marriage and divorce, he goes right back to Genesis 1 and 2. Paul when he deals with women speaking in the church, he goes right back to Genesis 1 and 2. Paul when he's dealing with the head covering goes right back to Genesis 1 and 2. Now brothers and sisters, are we prepared to say Jesus' teaching on divorce and remarriage is cultural? Are we going to say that Paul's teaching on church order is cultural? Well if we're not prepared to do that, how can we come to 1 Corinthians 11 where the same moral principles of the universe are laid out to justify this whole subject of the head covering and say that that is? Are you following my argument there? Paul is basing this teaching on the need for a head covering on the moral foundations of the universe established by God at the beginning in Genesis 1 and 2. And if we're going to throw this out, we've got to throw a lot of other New Testament teaching out too.

Now we may not agree with Paul's indication, but that brings us to a problem. Are we going to say Paul was wrong? Well I'm not going to say that. I'm not going to say that.

So first argument from the moral principles of the universe, where's culture in that? I don't see it. But he has two other lines of argument. He says in 1 Corinthians 11 that you need to have your head covered because of the angels, because of the angels.

Now the angels are in heaven. The angels are celestial beings. The angels are cross-cultural.

They're above culture. They're beyond culture. And he says a woman should practice the principles of 1 Corinthians 11 because of the angels.

So he's appealed first to the moral order. Now he's appealing to the celestial order. And then he goes to the third argument.

And he says in 1 Corinthians 11 verse 14, does not nature itself even teach you? Moral order, celestial order, natural order. Where is culture in all that? It's not there. None of the arguments that Paul uses to justify a woman wearing the head covering have anything to do with culture.

He appeals to principles that transcend culture, that are the foundation of the cosmos, the third heaven as well as the heaven and earth that we know. Now we have to reach the conclusion that either Paul was terribly confused or ignorant or else he meant for you and me to understand this instruction to be for us, no matter what place or time we might happen to live. At least for myself, you know, that's the conclusion I've come to.

And I, there's a couple of good quotes I'd like to read. I've quoted Godet several times and I've got another good quote that I would like to read to you on this whole subject. But he says this, was this conviction concerning the head covering solely a matter of time and place? So it is possible to suppose that if he lived now and in the west, the apostle would have expressed himself differently.

This supposition is not admissible for the reasons he alleges are not taken from contemporary usages but from permanent facts which will last as long as the present earthly economy. The physical constitution of the woman in verses 13 through 15 is still the same as when Paul wrote and will continue so until the renewing of all things. The history of creation to which he appeals, verses 12, remains the principle of the social state now as in the time of the apostles.

And the sublime analogies between the relations of God to Christ, Christ to man and man to woman have not changed to this hour. So that it must be said that either the apostle was wholly wrong in his reasoning or that his reasons as they were true for his time are still so for ours and will be till the end. Well, let me finish with this question.

What if you're still not convinced? What if you're still not convinced? I hope you are, but what if perhaps you've still got some questions? Well, let me quote to you another theologian. He's a very popular modern-day theologian. His name is R.C. Sproul.

I don't know if you're familiar with him or not, but he had a really good comment that relates to this issue. Consider what he says here. What if after careful consideration of a biblical mandate, we remain uncertain as to its character as principle or custom? If we must decide to treat it one way or the other, but have no conclusive means to make that decision, what can we do? Here the biblical principle of humility can be helpful.

The issue is simple. Would it be better to treat a possible custom as a principle and be guilty of being over scrupulous in our design to obey God? Or would it be better to treat a possible principle as a custom and be guilty of being unscrupulous in demoting a transcendent requirement of God to the level of a mere human convention? I hope the answer is obvious. I think I'll end the subject with that same thought.

I hope first off that what has been said has impressed you as powerfully as it did me as I've studied this issue that the cultural argument just doesn't have a lot of foundation, particularly in relationship to 1 Corinthians chapter 11. But even if you still have questions, as Sproul said, I hope the answer is obvious. Because what is better? Is it better to say something that's cultural and run the risk of disobeying God? Or is it a better course of action if there's some degree of doubt to say I'd better not take any chance because I want to obey God and the worst that can happen is that I might be being a little over scrupulous and go ahead and do and obey that commandment.

Which is the best course of action for somebody who really wants to please God and loves God? What's the best course of action for such a person to take? As Sproul said, I hope the answer is obvious. I hope the answer is obvious. So, the cultural argument.

Any questions? Again, this issue right here, as I've said before, is the major issue regarding this passage. I realize I think most of the people that are attending the Bible study, that probably isn't the case. The hair issue is the major issue.

But speaking generally, this issue is the major issue. In scholarly matters, it is the major issue. But I hope we've been convincing on it.

What Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 11 is for us to obey. And we should obey. Any questions? Okay.

If any come to your mind, next week, we will have one more lesson. It'll be kind of an odds and ends lesson. I have several practical matters that I want to address that I haven't done yet.

There have been some questions that have been asked that I would like to address. And if you have any other things that you think of between now and next weekend that have come to your mind as questions, please let me know because I will try and address them next week. And Lord willing, next week we'll finish our study on this passage.

Okay. Let's pray. Father, once again, we thank you for your word.

Once again, we ask for your heart to understand. We ask for your wisdom to know what it is you would have us to do.

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