

A Biblical Examination of Hair and Headship

Apostolic Guidelines for the Genders



HAIR AND HEADSHIP

AN APOSTOLIC PERSPECTIVE FROM 1 CORINTHIANS 11

*But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her:
for her hair is given her for a covering.*

1 Corinthians 11:15

Restoring Oneness Apostolic Truth
In the Last Days

Comprehensive Study Guide Series

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I. Hair and Headship

An Apostolic Perspective from 1 Corinthians 11

The discussion of hair in 1 Corinthians 11 is not primarily about fashion, culture, or personal preference. It is about headship, authority, and submission to God's created order. The Apostle Paul begins the chapter by establishing a chain of headship:

 1 Corinthians 11:3 (KJV)

"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."

The subject is therefore not merely hair, but what the hair represents. Just as Christ submits to the Father, and the man is under Christ's authority, the woman demonstrates her submission to God's order through her God-given covering.

Paul teaches that a woman's long hair is her glory:

 1 Corinthians 11:15 (KJV)

"But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering."

The hair is not presented as a burden or a punishment. It is presented as a glory. God gave it to her as a visible expression of His design and order.

Paul also makes a direct comparison between cutting the hair and shaving the head:

 1 Corinthians 11:6 (KJV)

"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."

Notice that Paul places being shorn and being shaven in the same category of shame. The argument only makes sense if cutting the hair violates the principle he is teaching. The distinction is not between cutting a little and cutting a lot. Paul's point is that removing the covering is contrary to God's order.

This is why Apostolic believers have historically taught that women should not cut their hair. The issue is not legalism, tradition, or human preference. The issue is obedience to Scripture. If the hair is the God-given covering and glory of the woman, then preserving that covering becomes an act of submission to God's design.

As Apostolic Christians, we believe all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and remains profitable for doctrine and instruction in righteousness. We do not approach Scripture by asking whether a command is convenient, popular, or accepted by modern culture. We approach Scripture by asking what God has said. If a teaching is found in the Word of God, our responsibility is to submit to it.

The Apostolic position on uncut hair is therefore not merely about hair. It is about headship. It is about honoring God's order. It is about recognizing that Christ is our Head and willingly submitting ourselves to the teachings of Scripture. In a world that increasingly rejects God's design, the Apostolic commitment to uncut hair remains a visible testimony of obedience, submission, and respect for the authority of God's Word.

II. The Covering Is the Hair

Many churches attempt to avoid the plain teaching of 1 Corinthians 11 by claiming that a veil, hat, or other artificial covering fulfills Paul's instruction. However, Paul does not say that a veil is given to the woman for a covering. He explicitly states:

 1 Corinthians 11:15 (KJV)

"But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: **for her hair is given her for a covering.**"

The Scripture identifies the covering as the hair itself. The argument is not that a woman must wear a covering in addition to her hair, nor that a veil can replace the hair. Paul plainly says that God has already given the woman her covering: her hair.

This is one reason Apostolic believers reject the idea that a veil satisfies the command while allowing the hair to be cut. A veil can be put on and taken off at will. The hair, however, is the covering God Himself provided. To substitute a man-made covering for the God-given covering is to replace the plain teaching of Scripture with human tradition.

The issue is not whether a veil can cover the head. The issue is what Paul said was given to the woman for her covering. Scripture answers that question directly: "her hair is given her for a covering."

III. The Man's Hair and God's Order

The principle of headship in 1 Corinthians 11 applies to men as well as women. Paul does not merely address the woman's hair; he also addresses the man's hair and connects it to God's created order.

 1 Corinthians 11:14 (KJV)

"Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?"

Paul presents this as a self-evident principle rooted in nature and God's design. Just as a woman's long hair is given to her for a glory, a man's long hair is described as a shame. The distinction between male and female appearance is not accidental but part of God's created order.

This is consistent with the broader theme of the chapter. God established distinctions between Christ and man, man and woman, and He also established visible distinctions that reflect those relationships. A man's short hair and a woman's uncut hair serve as outward acknowledgments of the headship order established by God.

As Apostolic believers, we do not believe these distinctions are arbitrary cultural customs. Paul grounds them in creation, nature, and divine order. The issue is not fashion, personal preference, or the trends of a particular generation. The issue is submission to the pattern God established.

Just as we believe women should preserve the covering God gave them, we also believe men should maintain the distinction God established for them. The Bible does not present masculinity and femininity as interchangeable. God intentionally created distinction, and that distinction is reflected even in the hair.

The Apostolic position therefore affirms both sides of the teaching: women are to maintain the long hair God gave them for a covering and glory, and men are to avoid the long hair that Scripture identifies as a shame. Both teachings flow from the same principle of biblical headship and submission to God's order.

IV. Culture Does Not Override Scripture

One of the most common objections to biblical holiness standards is that they are inconvenient or out of step with modern culture. Yet Scripture has never been subject to the approval of culture. The question is not whether a teaching is convenient, but whether it is biblical.

In many societies, including modern America, certain biblical standards may be viewed as outdated, unpopular, or even impractical. For example, modest apparel may not always be convenient in a culture that celebrates immodesty. Wearing a long dress in a workplace environment may not always be the easiest or most fashionable choice. Yet convenience does not determine truth, nor does culture determine doctrine.

The same principle applies to uncut hair. Whether a culture favors short hair, whether it is easier to maintain, or whether it is more socially accepted has no bearing on what Scripture teaches. God's instructions are not given because they are convenient; they are given because they reflect His will and His order.

Throughout history, God's people have often been called to live differently than the cultures around them. Noah, Abraham, Moses, the prophets, the Apostles, and the early church all found themselves at odds with the world around them. Obedience has never been measured by convenience. It has always been measured by submission to God's Word.

As Apostolic believers, we do not believe Scripture must conform to culture. We believe culture must be judged by Scripture. If the Bible teaches a principle, then our responsibility is to obey it whether it is popular or unpopular, convenient or inconvenient. The authority of God's Word does not change when society changes.

V. God's Design: Male and Female

The principles of headship, modesty, and distinction do not begin in 1 Corinthians 11. They begin in creation itself. From the very beginning, God intentionally created two distinct genders with distinct roles, characteristics, and identities.

 Genesis 1:27 (KJV)

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

God did not create humanity as genderless, interchangeable, or undefined. He created mankind as male and female. These distinctions were not the invention of culture, tradition, or society. They were established by God Himself before sin entered the world.

Because these distinctions originate with God, they are to be preserved and honored. Scripture consistently teaches that men are to embrace godly masculinity and women are to embrace godly femininity. The goal is not merely outward appearance but a life that reflects God's created order in attitude, conduct, appearance, and identity.

This principle extends even to clothing:

 Deuteronomy 22:5 (KJV)

"The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God."

God's concern was not simply a particular style of clothing but the preservation of distinction between male and female. Men were not to present themselves as women, nor women as men. God's people were to maintain clear and visible distinctions that reflected His created order.

As Apostolic believers, we do not determine masculinity and femininity according to the ever-changing standards of culture. Every generation has its fashions, trends, and social pressures. The Word of God remains unchanged. Our responsibility is not to conform Scripture to modern culture but to conform ourselves to Scripture.

This is why Apostolic Christians have historically emphasized modesty, distinction, and holiness. These principles are not based upon the commandments of men but upon the created order established by God. Hair, dress, conduct, and appearance all become outward expressions of an inward commitment to honor God's design.

The issue is not merely hair. The issue is not merely clothing. The issue is submission to God's order. From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture consistently affirms that God created men and women distinct from one another, and He calls His people to preserve those distinctions in a way that honors Him. In a world increasingly committed to erasing those distinctions, the Apostolic commitment remains the same: to obey God's Word whether it is convenient or not, popular or not, and to preserve the distinctions God Himself established in the beginning.