

1 CORINTHIANS: LESSON 29

Chapter 11: New Testament Ordinance on Hair

5 January 2018

In First Corinthians 11:1-16 the Apostle Paul established a new ordinance instructing men and women in the Body of Christ to wear their hair as prescribed here and for the purposes listed. An ordinance is defined in Webster's 1828 dictionary as: *"A rule established by authority; a permanent rule of action."* We are responsible to obey this ordinance regardless of our preferences, opinions, or the loose standards accepted by society as a whole. This is the biblical standard for hair length which must be obeyed by all Christians today.

1. Not only within the confines of the church house, but in the home and wherever we go in this world. This is God's command on the subject and that's the only reason we need to obey it.
2. The context is male headship and leadership over the female. This also is not limited to church meetings, but must be observed in the home (Eph. 5:22, Col. 3:18).
 - a. Female leadership is only wrong because God said it is wrong (Isaiah 3:12). Many women are better leaders than men, but if they choose to ignore God's clear commands to take the submissive role, they are rejecting the will of God and inviting the unpleasant consequences of their rebellious nature. The greatest cost is that you break fellowship with your Lord.
3. By the Lord's authority, man (Adam) was made the head, and the woman (Eve) was made an "help meet for him." Nowhere in Scripture does this relationship change. Also, God did not provide any conditional clause excusing the woman from submitting to the man. Her refusal to do so will cause trouble with her true authority, the Lord.
 - a. *"Too many cooks spoil the broth."* If too many people are involved in the same task, it will not be done well. *"Too many chiefs..."* If everyone wants to be in charge, no actual work will be accomplished. God wants our lives to be blessed, and He knows that the best way to ensure our success is to follow the authority structure He established for our benefit.
4. The outward, visible symbol of a man's submission to the will of God is that he keeps his hair cut short. The outward, visible symbol of a woman's submission to the authority that God set up is her long hair.

Vs 4 Paul speaks of **"praying"** and **"prophesying."** This automatically broadens the application of the subject matter beyond the boundaries of the assembled church.

- **"Pray without ceasing"** (1 Thess. 5:17). Christians are not limited to praying only in church. These instructions will pertain to a man and a woman's appearance at all times and in every place.
- **"But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort"** (1 Cor. 14:3). Wherever you may have an opportunity to speak to men, your hair ought to be worn the way God prescribes it in this chapter.

Vs 5 The woman also prays and prophesies, but not in the church house (1 Cor. 14:34-35, 1 Tim. 2:11-12). Wherever she has an opportunity to speak to pray or prophesy, her hair ought to honor her head.

5-6 A woman would be ashamed to be seen with a bald head. She ought to be just as ashamed to shear or to shave her hair. Instinctively, a woman will prefer to have her head covered by her hair.

Vs 7 A man ought to be ashamed to “**cover his head;**” to have long hair, resembling a woman.

- **Vs 14** Nature teaches that long hair on a man is a shame to him.
- **Vs 15** Nature teaches that long hair on a woman is a glory to her.
 - The man is the glory of God, the woman is the glory of man (vs 7), long hair is the glory of the woman (vs 15).
 - God sacrificed Himself (Acts 20:28) for his glory (man).
 - Man (Adam) sacrificed himself for his glory (woman).
 - Strangely, a woman will choose to sacrifice her GLORY (long hair) for equality with man.
 - The woman’s long hair is her covering. She was told that her head should be covered by that covering. She was not told to cover the covering (with a hat or a doily or a hanky).

Vs 10 “**Because of the angels.**” “**We shall judge angels**” (1 Cor. 6:3). How can we dare to judge an angel who rebelled against God if we ourselves have rebelled against God by refusing to adhere to his ordinances?

Vs 16 “**We have no such custom.**” This does not mean that what Paul taught in this passage concerning hair “*doesn’t really matter anyway.*” He’s merely pointing out that there is no Old Testament or recently established New Testament precedence on the subject, so he’s not referring to any previously established ordinance.

Jesus’ parents brought Him to the temple “**after the custom of the law**” (Luke 2:27). They were following a previously established custom. But there was no custom on hair before God established it in Corinth.

We have a testimony to proclaim, not only in our participation of the Lord’s Supper (in the context here), but also in our day-to-day lives among anyone who might see us. That testimony is that we are not following the dictates of society, but the ordinances of God.

If society tells us “*it’s okay, go ahead and do it,*” but God says, “*It’s not okay, I don’t want you to do it,*” then we will obey God—and stand as a testimony to the fact that there is something different about us, thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ.
