

2 I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you. **3** But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. **4** Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. **5** But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is the same as having her head shaved. **6** For if a woman does not cover her head, she might as well have her hair cut off; but if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, then she should cover her head.

7 A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. **8** For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; **9** neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. **10** It is for this reason that a woman ought to have authority over her own head, because of the angels. **11** Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. **12** For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.

13 Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? **14** Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, **15** but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering. **16** If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God.

1st Corinthians Chapter 11, v.2-16 (NIV)

Observation (what does the text say?) Interpretation (what does it mean?) Application (what does it mean to me/us?)

Discussion/Topic Starters (Ice Breakers)

- When have you observed (or even been part of) conflict in a church over what is appropriate and what is inappropriate in public worship? How do you determine what is appropriate in public worship?

O: What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?

Chapter 11:2-16

O: In Paul's day, as in many ways in our day, gender was marked by hair and clothing styles. We can tell from statues, vase paintings and other artwork of the period how this worked out in practice. There was social pressure to maintain appropriate distinctions. Read 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. What is the basic issue Paul is addressing?

O: What kind of “traditions” Paul is talking about in v.2?

O: In vv. 4-5, is the issue a matter of what is being done by men vs. women, or how its being done?

I: What did an uncovered/covered head symbolize in that culture? Thus, what would a woman with her head uncovered or a man with his head covered be doing?

I: What does Paul mean by using the word “head” in v. 3?

Follow-up: In any relationship, does authority (or submission) mean that one party is better than the other?

Follow-up: Have you ever thought of or treated one sex as inferior or superior to the other sex in any way (be honest)? How has our culture/society affected your past or present views?

Follow-up: Read Genesis 1:27 and Galatians 3:28. How does the Bible view the personhood, value and skills of women in relation to men?

I: While noting differences between men and women, how does Paul also affirm their mutual interdependence (vv. 11-12)?

I: *BE GRACIOUS ON THIS NEXT QUESTION! This is not about debate, it's about discussion. There will likely be different interpretations in the group on this, make sure everyone is humble/open, many scholars/theologians don't agree on these gender issues and how they apply to today.* *How much of what Paul taught about women in the church was specific to the culture of the time and how much is universally applicable even today?

I: What is the overarching principle that Paul is trying to make about men & women? About church and culture? About Church practices when gathered?

A: We face different issues than the original readers of this text, but making sure that our worship is ordered appropriately, to honor God's creation and anticipate its fulfillment in the new creation, is still a priority. How could your behavior express greater honor to God when you enter into worship?

Recommended Follow-up:

- Read: Next week's sermon (4/24/16) will focus on 1st Corinthians Ch 11:17-34. Take time prior to next Sunday to read & study the passage, pray through the passage, meditate on the passage, etc.

* As discussed in Riverside's HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid “go through this guide word-for-word.” There are intentionally too many questions for a single home group time. This guide relies heavily upon *1st Corinthians discussion guides* by N.T. Wright (ISBN# 9780830821877), *MacArthur* (9781418508760), *Wiersbe* (9781434703767), *Stevens & Williams* (9780830830091), *NavPress* (9780891095590), *Life Application* (9781414326481), *Serendipity Bible* (Littleton, CO 1989).