



"NOW CONCERNING"—

*Reply To Their Letter –
Liberty In Christ – 7:1-16:4*

**Covering One's Head &
The Principles of
Headship & Submission**

1 Corinthians 11:2-16

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

- ✦ First question pertained to marriage – (Chapter 7)
- ✦ The second question dealt with eating meat offered to idols – (Chapters 8-10)
- ✦ Chapters 11:2-16:4 deal with a variety of topics, beginning with the issue of “headship” – 11:2-16



PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING



Mike Willis
Truth Commentary
PP. 354

.."I suggest that some among the women in Corinthians church had decided that they could cast aside all symbols of subjection to men since 'there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ.'" (Gal. 3:28)...From what I can gather, the women must have been in the midst of a small women's liberation movement there in Corinth..Thus, the primary thrust of this passage pertains to subjection. To persuade the women not to cast aside their symbol of subjection, Paul made six arguments.'

(p. 354)

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

1 Corinthians 11:2-16 (NKJV)

² Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered *them* to you.

³ But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God.

⁴ Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonors his head.

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

1 Corinthians 11:2-16 (NKJV)

⁵ But every woman who prays or prophesies with *her* head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. ⁶ For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered.

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

1 Corinthians 11:2-16 (NKJV)

⁷ For a man indeed 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 is not from woman, but woman from man. ⁹ Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. ¹⁰ For this reason the woman ought to have *a symbol of* authority on *her* head, because of the angels.

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

1 Corinthians 11:2-16 (NKJV)

¹¹ Nevertheless, neither *is* man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. ¹² For as woman *came* from man, even so man also *comes* through woman; but all things are from God. ¹³ Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

1 Corinthians 11:2-16 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? ¹⁵ But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for *her* hair is given to her for a covering. ¹⁶ But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor *do* the churches of God.

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

FOUR DIFFERENT POSITIONS

- ◆ The head covering is still required today
- ◆ A matter of culture, and should be followed wherever it is the prevailing practice (*Nigeria, Iraq, etc. . . . for example*)
- ◆ The hair is the covering.
- ◆ Refers to spiritually gifted women.



PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

WHO? WHAT? WHY? WHEN? WHERE?



- ◆ **Who is being spoken to?**
 - ❖ Men & women who were praying & prophesying.
- ◆ **What is being required?**
 - ❖ Men be uncovered and women be covered.
- ◆ **Why is this important?**
 - ❖ Because of the principles of subjection to Christ and the husband.

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

WHO? WHAT? WHY? WHEN? WHERE?



- ◆ When does this apply?
 - ❖ When men and women are praying and prophesying.
- ◆ Where does this apply?
 - ❖ Wherever men and women are praying and prophesying.

"I don't believe that women ever prayed and prophesied as described here in an assembly." (14:34)

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

WHO? WHAT? WHY? WHEN? WHERE?



'It is quite essential to note that no modifier is attached to the participles to denote a place where these activities were exercised. So we on our part should not introduce one...By omitting reference to a place Paul says this: "Wherever and whenever it is proper and right for a man or for a woman to pray or to prophesy, the difference between sex should be marked ..' (*Lenski* p. 436)

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

GIVE PRAISE WHERE IT IS DUE



**1 Corinthians 11:2
(NKJV)**

² Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered *them* to you.

- ◆ **Now I praise you** – A congregation that had so many problems also had a record of keeping the things Paul had instructed them -
- ◆ **“Keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you”** – (ordinances KJV) – Not things handed down from men, but traditions that are handed down from heaven – Mat. 21:25; 2 Thes 2:15

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

THE PRINCIPLE OF HEADSHIP



**1 Corinthians 11:3
(NKJV)**

**3 But I want you to
know that the
head of every man
is Christ, the head
of woman is man,
and the head of
Christ is God.**

- ◆ “But I want you to know” –
Understand (NASB) – The main point is that of headship and proper subordination. Men are subordinate to Christ. Women are subordinate to men. Christ is subordinate to his Father.
- ◆ ‘Every man’- every man is subject to Christ, whether he recognizes that fact or not. (Ephesians 1:20-22; 1 Cor. 15:27; Philippians 2:9-11)

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

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- ◆ “The head of woman is man” – Christianity didn't dissolve this fact. Neither did it dissolve subjection and authority in the realms of citizenship (*Romans 13:1ff*); employment (*Ephesians 6:5-9*) or the family (*Ephesians 6:1-4*).
 - ❖ *Wives to be in subjection to their husbands - (Eph. 5:23).*
 - ❖ *Women not to teach or exercise authority over a man - (1 Tim. 2:12).*

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

THE PRINCIPLE OF HEADSHIP



**1 Corinthians 11:3
(NKJV)**

³ But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

- ◆ Everything else stems from this subject - It is the subject of every part of this section
- ❖ Adam first formed - 1 Tim. 2:13
- ❖ Woman is of the man & for him - 1 Cor. 1:8,9
- ❖ Woman was deceived - 1 Tim 2:14
- ❖ From beginning – “he shall rule over thee” - Gen. 3:16
- ❖ Weaker vessel 1 Pet. 3:5-6

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

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- ◆ "Headship" doesn't imply or demand that the one in subjection is necessarily inferior (Christ isn't inferior to God-John 5:18,23; Phili. 2:5-8).
- ◆ 'The principle involves no humiliation, no injustice, no wrong. It recognizes a difference of function and responsibility, but it precludes selfishness, harshness, and unkindness.' (Erdman p. 112)

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

THE PRINCIPLE OF HEADSHIP



**1 Corinthians 11:4
(NKJV)**

**4 Every man
praying or
prophesying,
having *his* head
covered,
dishonors his
head.**

- ◆ “Praying or prophesying” – Prophecy is inspired teaching – (1 Cor. 14:29-32), there were also inspired prayers – (1 Cor. 14:14,15).
- ◆ '**covered**'- 'Lit., having something hanging down from his head.'
(Vincent p. 246)
- ◆ If the covering discussed here is the hair, only a bald man could pray. The dishonor here would be to Christ,

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

THE PRINCIPLE OF HEADSHIP



**1 Corinthians 11:4
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head.**

- ◆ 'Paul..did not bring the veil to Corinth. It was there when he arrived. It already had the significance it had before Paul was around to have any say in the matter.' (McGuiggan p. 143)
- ◆ 'Paul has in mind a veil which covers the whole head and in particular conceals all the hair; something worn on top of the head like a present-day cap or hat does not really come with the scope of his argument.' (F.F. Bruce p. 104)

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

THE PRINCIPLE OF HEADSHIP



**1 Corinthians 11:4
(NKJV)**

**⁴ Every man
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head.**

It wasn't inherently immoral for men to pray with something on their heads. The Jewish High Priest wore a turban (Exodus 28:4; 39:28 Leviticus 16:23), while ministering before the Lord. 'At times such ministering, as you very well know, there were prayers connected with the sacrifices and offerings.'

(McGuiggan p. 144)

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

THE PRINCIPLE OF HEADSHIP

**1 Corinthians 11:5
(NKJV)**

**5 But every woman
who prays or
prophecies with
her head
uncovered
dishonors her
head, for that is
one and the same
as if her head were
shaved.**

- ◆ "There were women . . . who were dismissing the token of their womanhood (in that society) and denying their place of subjection to men." (McGuiggan p. 145)
- ◆ "Dishonors her head" – dishonors man – she is claiming when she prays and prophecies uncovered her equality in function to man.
- ◆ Gender distinctions must be maintained -

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

THE PRINCIPLE OF HEADSHIP

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- ◆ Women did have the gift of prophecy in the N.T. Church. (Acts 2:17; 21:9)
- ◆ Scriptural opportunities for it's use were present. (Titus 2:3-4)
- ◆ “. . . shorn hair was disgraceful in Corinthian society... to be unveiled in Corinth conveyed about the same meaning in that society as having a shaved head... (Willis pp. 367-368)

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

THE PRINCIPLE OF HEADSHIP



**1 Corinthians 11:6
(NKJV)**

**⁶For if a woman is
not covered, let
her also be shorn.**

**But if it is
shameful for a
woman to be
shorn or shaved,
let her be covered.**

- ◆ “. . . His point is that a woman, WHO ORDINARILY HAS HER HEAD COVERED WHEN APPEARING IN PUBLIC, must also have it covered when she prays or prophesies.. . (Willis pp. 367-368)
- ◆ Paul's argument is that since a woman is going to cast off one "sign" of her femininity and subjection, then, why not really demonstrate independence from men in general, and discard another "sign", i.e. her long hair.

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

THE PRINCIPLE OF HEADSHIP



**1 Corinthians 11:6
(NKJV)**

**6 For if a woman is
not covered, let
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**But if it is
shameful for a
woman to be
shorn or shaved,
let her be covered.**

- ◆ 'One kind of action (being uncovered) is just like another (having mannish hair). If the latter is shameful, so too is the former.'
(Fee p. 512)
- ◆ The divine arrangement is that the woman is subject to man and the veil of the female at that time and in that area proclaimed that.' Man (the male) cannot wear such a token of subjection.' (McGuiggan p. 148)

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

THE PRINCIPLE OF HEADSHIP



1 Corinthians 11:7-9 (NKJV)

⁷ For a man indeed 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 is not from woman, but woman from man.

⁹ Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man.

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

THE PRINCIPLE OF HEADSHIP



**1 Corinthians 11:10
(NKJV)**

**¹⁰ For this reason
the woman ought
to have *a symbol*
of authority on
her head, because
of the angels.**

- ◆ The angels are above men and women in creation order (Heb 2:7). This practice is a sign of respect for the creation order.
- ◆ 'because of the angels' - 'She is to keep the place God has given to her. There were angels who were given position and rank but who refused to keep that rank and they were punished for their rebellion. Jude 6

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

THE PRINCIPLE OF HEADSHIP



1 Corinthians 11:11-12 (NKJV)

¹¹ Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord.

¹² For as woman *came* from man, even so man also *comes* through woman; but all things are from God.

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

THE PRINCIPLE OF HEADSHIP



1 Corinthians 11:13-15 (NKJV)

¹³ Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?

¹⁴ Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him?

¹⁵ But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for *her* hair is given to her for a covering.

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

THE PRINCIPLE OF HEADSHIP



- ◆ "Judge for yourselves" doesn't mean, "have it one way or the other." It means "don't you see the truth of what I'm saying."
- ◆ Obviously this doesn't mean that it's impossible for a man to have long hair. Nazirites and John the Baptist had long hair. It's not speaking about physiology, but established practice.
- ◆ When all things are equal, the general practice is that men have short hair and women have long hair.

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

THE PRINCIPLE OF HEADSHIP



1 Corinthians 11:16
(NKJV)

¹⁶ But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.

- ✦ Did Paul go through all this and say, "but we don't really have any practice about this?" No, that's silly (v2).
- ✦ The practice we don't have is that of being contentious—i.e. don't fight argue about this!
- ✦ They had an arrogant, unwilling attitude to follow Paul's teaching on some matters (ch1-6) and he is trying to preempt this.

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

THE APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE:

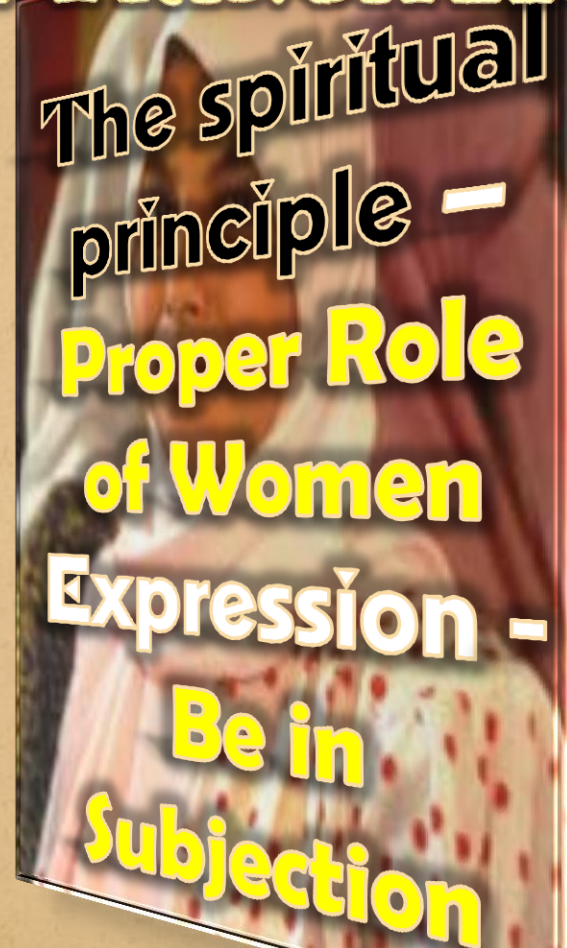
- ✦ Women customarily wore an artificial covering to symbolize their moral virtue and subjection to men – (1 Cor 11:2-16)
- ✦ Women were not to cast off the symbol of their submission when praying or prophesying – their possession of spiritual gifts did not raise them to functional equality with men.



PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

THE APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE:

- ✦ The spiritual principle? – Women are to be in subjection to men. (14:34-37; 1 Pet 3:1-6)
- ✦ The spiritual principle goes all the way back to the beginning, (1 Tim 2:11-14), and is binding.
- ✦ If the custom is to wear an artificial veil – wear it – but we cannot elevate the custom to the level of a divine rite.



The spiritual
principle –
**Proper Role
of Women**
Expression –
**Be in
Subjection**

PRAYING, PROPHESYING AND THE COVERING

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