

Sunday School
Head coverings and Old Testament Hospitality

A. Prayer

B. Head coverings-

1. 1 Cor. 11:1-16-*"Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. 2 Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. 3 But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. 6 For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. 7 For 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 was not made from woman, but woman from man. 9 Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. 10 That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. 11 Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; 12 for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. 13 Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? 14 Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, 15 but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. 16 If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God."*

2. Without touching on everything you can think of, what would you say is Paul's main point is concerning men and women?

a. Hint...

- (1) It does not seem to be that women are to always wear head coverings (unless you live in Corinth) and men can never have long hair.
- (2) By virtue of there is no real prohibition to long hair in Scripture for men in fact there was a requirement for Nazarene...like Samson to have long hair and culturally shoulder length hair was the rage.
- (3) Men and women both were praying and prophesying in Corinth...and that is okay...but how they do it is being called into question and what they look like while they are doing it.

b. Think about the greater context:

- (1) Chapter 9...Paul has talked about how he must surrender "his" rights for the glory of God.
- (2) Chapter 10:1-22...talks about the idolatries that they must flee
- (3) Chapter 10:23-11:1...Paul talks to them about how they are to glorify God and ends with if you don't know what that looks like still...Imitate me as he imitates Christ before them.
- (4) Chapter 11:2-16...speaks to how it appears that some of the people in Corinth wanted to blend the sexes by not making distinctions obvious. This is more than fashion ...it is expressions as well.

- (5) Chapt. 11:17-34...rebuttal about how they are not keeping the Lord's Supper even though they had been originally taught.**
- (6) So in every case there is an underlying sinful issue that Paul is addressing that may only be to this church but principally is for all God's church that wish to do according to their own will rather than according to God's expressed will.**
- c. Paul seems to be stating that we are not to purposefully confuse the appearance of our genders... that is contrary to nature...God's creation order and design.**
- (1) The problem in vs. 4-6 is simply that men and women in Corinth are rejecting God's design as well as the culturally accepted practices of the day in Corinth. 1st Century feminism run amok and 1st Century openness expression among males run amuck even farther afield than what was acceptable to the pagans...we ran into this back in chapter 5 as well.**
- (2) It isn't right for men to look like women... or to want to look like women. Women were throwing off biblical distinctions.**
- (3) The Greek here also speaks to effeminacy...expressing themselves in a feminine way...and this works the other way as well...women are not to look or express themselves in a masculine way. He understands that genders are dictated by God not men....and that distinction is to be preserved by all men but especially when we come to worship.**
- (4) There is a biblical model of headship which is a creation ordinance and it should not be changed or rejected...which they apparently were. By reiterating this basic principle: Vs 3- *"But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God."***
- This is how they are to imitate him as he imitates Christ with this understanding of how things work.**
 - It is not about hair or head coverings...it's about understanding our role and design and working accordingly otherwise we are shaming ourselves...the Church...and rejecting God.**
- d. So, what about today and our church?**
- (1) Well...if a man comes into church in a cocktail dress it would be or it used to be a disgrace to him. If a man puts on lipstick is used to be a disgrace to him. These reflect a blurring of the sexes.**
- (2) According to Paul it is a disgrace before God for a man or a woman to seek to look or be like the other gender...hence a sin, like all the other sins he has been addressing.**
- (3) We must promote and encourage the God given genders and God given roles in our church by God's design especially in a day and age when the culture around us is trying to do away with them.**
- (4) This is not with the mentally challenged...gender dysphoria may be a real thing to a very small minority and for that we must show love and support as we help a brother or a sister who struggles with this.**
- (5) Vs. 16 tells us that the pattern of headship and submission that Paul has been teaching is universally taught by all the churches and they express it with culturally appropriate dress and decorum that distinguishes men and women.**

- e. **One more thing...about the “hair” being the covering that is equaled with the head covering here:**
 - (1) It is a possibility.**
 - (2) But it is not likely...since exegetically hair is the women’s expression of God’s glory ...or a sign of her glory or as the Greek says... “It is as a glory to her” or a glory accruing to her”...in other words to her advantage which marks her distinct in God’s creation ...difference from the man...as opposed to the head covering is a sign of submission to the man and/ or male leadership.**

C. Old Testament hospitality

1. **A working short definition for hospitality:**
 - a. **To honor and obey God by serving those around us. As Christians we are called to practice Biblical Hospitality...and practice it with joy! Hospitality is about investing in other’s lives and learning how you can best serve those around you.**
 - b. **A biblical theological definition might be, “The quality or disposition of receiving and treating guests and strangers in a warm, friendly, generous way.”**
 - (1) During His public ministry, Jesus and His disciples depended entirely on the hospitality of others as they ministered from town to town (Matthew 10:9-10).**
 - (2) Likewise, the early Christians also depended on and received hospitality from others (Acts 2:44-45; 28:7).**
 - (3) In fact, travelers in ancient times depended heavily on the hospitality of strangers as traveling could be dangerous and there were very few inns, and poor Christians could not afford to stay at them, anyway.**
 - (4) This generous provision to strangers also included opening one’s home for church services. Hospitality was indeed a highly-regarded virtue in ancient times, especially for Christian leaders (Titus 1:8; 1 Timothy 3:2).**
2. **Hospitality is deeply rooted in the character of God. In the Old Testament, we see hospitality as an attribute of the character of God.**
 - a. **God creates the universe and provides a special place for Adam and Eve to live in the Garden of Eden.**
 - b. **As an attribute of God, hospitality finds its images in the biblical proclamation of the relationship between God and his people. Specifically, hospitality is seen in God calling out Israel to be his people and welcoming them into a covenant relationship with Himself.**
3. **Hospitality is a command for God’s people. We see the command given to the nation of Israel to care for the resident and welcome the foreigner or strangers living in the land.**
 - a. **This reality is the foundation of God’s command for hospitality found in Leviticus 19:33-34, “When an alien resides with you in your land, you must not oppress him. You will regard the alien who resides with you as the native-born among you. You are to love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God.”**

- (1) We are to treat all people equally.
 - (2) Travelers often relied on the kindness of strangers for survival and they took the call of serving strangers seriously!
 - (3) The Law called for permitting the alienated person to harvest the corners of one's fields.
 - (4) The Law also included among other things, tithing food for the needy (Deut 14:28-29 ; 26:1-11), and including the alien in religious celebrations (Exod 12:48-49 ; Deut 16:10-14).
 - (5) The problem was that while they may have done this with their own...they hesitated just like we do with non-Jews especially Gentiles. Consider the story of the Good Samaritan.
 - b. As an attribute or characteristic of God he then calls upon His people to care for one another accordingly...love your neighbor as yourself has far reaching implications for the resident and the alien in the land.
 - c. God punished His people when they did not treat one another according to His commands...it was and is that important to Him that people are treated first and foremost as image bearers of God.
 - d. But our loyalties begin with Him ...then work out to our families and our believing family and then to the greater world around us.
 - e. Images of God as gracious and generous provision are throughout the biblical materials.
 - (1) God provides manna and quail daily in the wilderness for a hungry and often ungrateful people.
 - (2) God offers shelter in a hot and dry land and refreshment through living water.
 - (3) Israel's covenant identity includes being a stranger, an alien, a tenant in God's land—both dependent on God for welcome and provision and answerable to God for its own treatment of aliens and strangers.
4. It is biblically commanded in the NT as well.
- a. **Romans 12:13-***“Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.”*
 - b. **Hebrews 13:2-***“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”*
 - c. **1 Peter 4:9 -***“Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.”*
 - d. The Greek word for hospitality that is used in the New Testament is *“philoxenia”* which literally means *“Love for Strangers”*.
 - (1) This communicated in the culture to “guest-friendship” or later hospitality.
 - (2) Each time we are commanded to practice hospitality, God is literally commanding us to have and show love for others!
 - (3) It comes from the root of the word used for the god Zeus-xenos...the god who protects strangers.
 - e. While Biblical hospitality is not a high priority for most modern western churches, it was vital to the growth, stability, and daily life if the early Church!
 - f. Love is a central theme of the Bible.
 - (1) We are to love God (Deuteronomy 10:12), love our neighbors (Luke 10:27), and love strangers (Philippians 2:3-4).

- (2) And at the root of hospitality is love. By practicing hospitality we are showing love for those in God's Church, love for strangers, neighbors, and unbelievers, and most of all, love for God by obeying his commands.**
- g. As we see, God commanded that the New Testament believers practice hospitality. This was not just a "gift" for certain people to use. He expected each church and each believer to live it out.**
 - h. A famous church historian, Adolf Harnack, wrote: *"During the early centuries of Christianity it was the Roman church more than any other which was distinguished by the generosity with which it practiced this virtue [hospitality]...A living interest in the collective church of Christ throbbed with peculiar vigor throughout the Roman church...and the practice of hospitality was one of its manifestations."***
 - i. But that is not how it is today:**
 - (1) Hospitality is a very foreign concept in our modern North American society. We are exchanging deep conversations for 140 character tweets. Conversations are becoming more shallow and we are becoming increasingly individualistic.**
 - (2) The days of sitting on the porch with iced tea and good conversation has been replaced with watching TV and frittering away hours on Facebook rather than getting to know our neighbors but our modern society even the church has shied away from opening our homes to serve those around us.**
- 5. Throughout Scripture hospitality is connected to the practice of sharing a meal. Consistently hospitality is practiced in the Old Testament as God's people welcome strangers and provide a meal.**
- a. It has been said, *"Few acts are more expressive of companionship than the shared meal. . . . Someone with whom we share food is likely to be our friend, or well on the way to becoming one."***
 - (1) The word "companion" comes from the Latin "*cum*" ("together") and "*panis*" ("bread"). A companion is someone you share your bread with.**
 - (2) In Genesis we see Abraham sharing a meal with the 3 "strangers" announcing the birth of Isaac. Actually Abraham ran to provide hospitality to these "men"...he readily and willingly manifested God's command.**
 - (3) David welcomes Mephibosheth, the son of King Saul, to eat at his table (2 Sam. 9) for the rest of his life if he wanted.**
 - (4) Then there is the meal that the prophet Elijah provided to the army sent to kill him (1 Kings 6)...not so much a companion thing but a recognition that they were following orders and he was too by hosting them with this meal.**
 - (5) In these days we often don't think much about entertaining strangers, but hospitality is still an important part of Christian ministry (Romans 12:13; 1 Peter 4:9). By serving others we serve Christ (Matthew 25:40) and we promote the spread of God's truth (3 John 5-8).**
 - (6) The invitation to the table for a meal is a powerful picture in the Old Testament that has its greatest fulfillment in the New Testament.**

(7) In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus discusses the hospitable behavior of those who will inherit the kingdom: *“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me”* (Matthew 25:34-36).

- **The Lord's Supper is a shared meal and is the activity most closely tied to the reality of God's kingdom, just as it is the most basic expression of hospitality.**
- **There will be a day when the redeemed saints of God will take their place at marriage supper of the Lamb, for a meal with King Jesus.**

6. So with this little bit of background...what kind of things should we be doing and why aren't we?