

CITY OF THE LIVING GOD

HOLINESS OF BODY:
HEAD COVERING

25

SERIES

In dedication to all the soul-winners that need a Bible study on holiness of the Body specifically about the head covering.

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City of the Living God



I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:1-4).

The Apostle Paul gave strong direction to his son in the gospel, Timothy. Timothy was a young preacher that the apostle had put in charge of churches and leaders in Asia Minor. He was instructed by the apostle to “reprove, rebuke, exhort” to maintain pure doctrine. It was such an important theme in all of his letters he wrote. Especially in the epistles he writes to Timothy, he emphasizes the need to hold on to doctrinal teachings. The word, doctrine, in the Greek is “didaskalia” and it means teaching or instruction. Some have tried to narrow the meaning to only teachings on salvation, but obviously the meaning is any teaching that is found in the Bible.

SOUND DOCTRINE

The Apostle Paul's strong teaching on maintaining the purity of the teachings within the Bible can be seen in all of his letters within the Bible. Just a cursory view of his Scriptures will show how important it was for him that we do not veer from the purity of the teachings.

Galatians 1:6

*“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be **accursed**. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be **accursed**.”*

1 Timothy 4:1-2

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.”

1 Timothy 4:6

“If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.”

1 Timothy 4:13

“Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”

1 Timothy 4:16

“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

DOCTRINE SUPERSEDES CULTURAL CHANGES

While some people believe that the Bible is outdated, Christians believe that the Scriptures are the Word of God forever. Society and cultures can change, but the Bible never changes. Truth will always be truth—no matter the time in which we live. The Bible is more up to date than tomorrow’s newspaper or scientific discoveries. Prophecy is still being fulfilled before our eyes that were foretold over 2000 years ago!

Matthew 24:35

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”

Numbers 23:19

“God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?” (ESV).

Isaiah 40:8

“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”

The Bible instructs us when society’s norms, morals, and lifestyles change, that the teachings and biblical concepts supersede culture. For example, in our society it is acceptable in our society to smoke, drink, or for some to take drugs, however, the Bible is very clear that this behavior is sin—no matter what era we live in. In fact, the Apostle Paul admonishes us to not allow society to change our beliefs.

Romans 12:2

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

TEACHING ON THE HEAD COVERING

One of the most well-known chapters in the Epistle to the Corinthians is found in chapter 11. Paul gives us 14 verses in the latter half of the chapter on the teaching of communion which is practiced by most churches regardless of denomination (vss. 20-34). He also gives us 16 verses on the teaching of the head covering (vss. 1-16). Just as the teaching on communion is very important to our Christian walk, so is the teaching of the head covering.

The Apostle Paul teaches us the importance of the head covering. He says that when a man prays that he should not have his head covered and that a woman when she prays should have her head covered. He says:

1 Corinthian 11:4-6

“Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn (cut): but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.”

Paul teaches that it is dishonorable for a man to have his head covered and a woman to have her head uncovered. He equates the woman not covering her head as if her hair were shaven completely. The key to understanding what the Apostle Paul is referring to when he speaks about the head being covered is found in verse 15. The head covering was not an actual physical veil, but it was the woman’s uncut hair.

1 Corinthians 11:15

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

The phrase, “long hair,” in the Greek is *komao*, which means to allow the hair to grow, or uncut hair. This Greek word is clear that it refers to

uncut hair. The Romans had a custom that some of their youth would not cut their hair and they used these same Greek words, *Keiro and Komao*, to describe “uncut hair.” They left their hair uncut for a period of time. This makes it clearer that a woman should not cut her hair according to vs. 6. If we read this verse with its meaning, it all makes much more sense.

1 Corinthians 11:6

*“For if the woman be not covered, let her also be **shorn** (cut): but if it be a shame for a woman to be **shorn** (cut) or shaven, let her be covered.”*

It’s interesting that in many of the other languages versions of the Bible, there is no need to explain this since it is already so clear in their translations such as Spanish, Italian, German, and many others.

Some have tried to state that this was only for their time period and society’s culture has changed and so the Bible should change with it. The problem with this is the Apostle Paul gives five reasons why a man should not have long hair and why a woman should have uncut hair. None of the Apostle Paul’s arguments are based on culture, but they are based on timeless concepts.

1. Headship (vs. 3)

- a. *“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”*

2. Angelic Covering (vs. 10)

- a. *“For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.”*

3. Judge within Yourself (vs. 13)

- a. *“Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?”*

4. Nature (vs. 14)

- a. *“Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?”*

5. Universal (vs. 16)

- a. *“If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God”* (NIV).

Obviously, it was so important that the Apostle Paul took 16 verses to teach this doctrinal truth. No where else in Paul’s teachings does he use so many different arguments to back up a biblical concept.

Commonly Asked Questions

Was this a Cultural Teaching?

Some have tried to state that this teaching was only for the Corinthian Church because the city of Corinth was known for the Temple of Aphrodite that had over 1000 temple prostitutes which had short hair. They try to make the argument that the Apostle Paul was trying to make sure that they did not look like one of the temple prostitutes.

First, the Apostle Paul does not mention anything about this as a reason; he gives us five reasons that are not based on things that change. Secondly, the Temple of Aphrodite did have 1000 prostitutes in the 3rd century BC. But in 146 BC, the city of Corinth was captured and destroyed and together with the 1000 prostitutes were swept away by the Romans. The city of Corinth was rebuilt and during the time of the apostles, the Temple of Aphrodite was very small and insignificant. Thirdly, the Apostle Paul says that this epistle was written to not only the Corinthians, but to “all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:2). In addition, his last argument in vs. 16 confirms that this was the same teaching that was given to all churches.

1 Corinthians 11:16

“If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God” (NIV).

Doesn't the word "shorn" mean to cut off most of the hair?

The Greek word, *Keiro*, is translated to shear, to cut. It does not specify length--only that it is cut. Some have tried to say that the word *Keiro* is the same word used to cut the wool from the sheep. That is true, but that same word is used to refer to trimming the hair also. Length is not specified or implied by the word. Hatton and Ellingworth (1995) state, "To be shorn, literally "cut-her-hair" in Greek, probably referred to a regular trimming of her hair" (A Handbook on Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians). According to The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, "Women never cut their hair (cf. Jer. 7:29), and long hair was their greatest ornament (Cant. 4:1; cf. 1 Cor. 11:15; Cant. 7:5)" (Samuel Macauley Jackson, p. 118). To further show that *Keiro* referred to trimming the hair, Plutarch, the ancient philosopher is asked in one of his writings by a barber, "πῶς σε κείρω;" (How shall I cut your hair?). He uses the word *Keiro* just like a barber would ask someone how much they want their hair trimmed.

Also, in 1 Corinthians 11:15, it is well attested that this word *Komao* refers to "uncut" hair. It's a common word that was used by the Greeks. Louw and Nida (1996) state, "In a number of languages it may be necessary to translate κομάω as 'to let one's hair grow long' or 'not to cut one's hair'" (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains, p. 526). The scripture is very clear in the Greek, "ὄτι ἡ κόμη ἀντὶ περιβολαίου ^[a]δέδοται (For her uncut hair (*Komao*) is given to her for a covering).

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