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HEADSHIP AND THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD REGARDING WOMEN

One of the major points of Scripture involves the position God assigns especially to women in His order of headship. It often goes against modern secular belief, so if both men and women aren't prepared to accept what God declares as being for their eternal good, there is bound to be resentment or outright conflict. More often than not, when there is a deviation from Scripture, men don't take the position assigned to them and women take a position not assigned to them.

HEADSHIP ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE

(Namely, from 1 Corinthians 11: 3-16)

Divine Order (vv.3-6)

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- The Head of every man is Christ (v.3).
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- The head of the woman is man (v.3).
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- The Head of Christ is God (v.3; Ps.16:7-8; Isa.50:4-5).
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Every man praying or prophesying [preaching] having his physical head covered, dishonors his spiritual Head which is Christ (v.4).

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But every woman who prays or prophesies (either privately among women or as she says "Amen" to the prayers of the men) with her physical head uncovered, dishonors her spiritual head which is man (v.5; Acts 21:8-9).

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If a woman is not covered (Gk: katakalupto—having something down on her head), let her be shorn (and look like the man she is trying to emulate), but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered (v.6).

Creation Order (vv.8-12)

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The man should not cover his head because he is a picture of the image and glory of God (v.7).

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The woman is to be covered because of her position in creation: the woman originally came from the man (v.8). The Church comes from Christ who went into a deep sleep (death) and was wounded in the side so He could have His Church.

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Woman was created for the man (v.9).

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There is no inferiority, but dependence (v.11).
Angelic Order Within Creation (v.10)

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The woman's covering is called power or authority on her head because of the angels who are observing God's order in the Church and how obedient His people are (1 Cor.4:9; Eph.3:10).

Order in Nature (vv.13-15)

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Is it proper for a woman to pray to God uncovered? (v.13).

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Nature teaches us that it is to a man's shame to have long hair (v.16).

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But if a woman has long hair, it is to her glory which is given her for a covering—Gk: perobolaion, something thrown around the head, a different thought than the added covering, above. She is to cover her head, including her hair.

Assembly Order (v.16)

- If anyone is contentious about God's order, neither the apostles nor the assemblies had any custom of disregarding God's Word. Therefore, a woman is to be covered even if she doesn't understand all the doctrinal points.

God's Order for Dress and Deportment

Deportment (1 Cor.14:34-37; 1 Tim.2:9-15; 1 Pet.3:1-6)

- The women of the assembly are not to speak when the assembly is "in assembly" (1 Cor.14:34).

- Women are commanded to be under obedience (v.34).

- If they need to learn something, they can ask their husbands (or, the men) at home (v.35).

- It is shameful for a woman to speak "in assembly" (v.35).

- Women are to learn in quietness, not causing a disturbance, with all subjection (1 Tim.2:11).

- They are not permitted to teach in the assembly (2:12).

- They are not permitted to have authority over men in spiritual things (2:12).

Deportment and Dress

- Women are to adorn themselves in modest apparel and also not in very costly (Gk: poluteles—a strong word) clothing (1 Tim.2:9).

- Moderation, propriety, faith, love, holiness and self-control should characterize the women, who are physically saved in childbearing (vv.9,13-15).

- Women should be well-pleasing to God, with good works, having a chaste manner of life (1 Tim.2:10; 1 Pet.3:2).

- Women should let the "hidden man" (Christ) be seen, having a "gentle and quiet spirit" (1 Pet.3:4).

General Guidelines for Women's Ministry

- Woman's primary sphere is the home, rearing children for the Lord, showing hospitality and guiding the house (1 Tim.5:10-14; Prov.31:10-31).

- A divinely-given helper to her husband (Gen.2:18-25).

- Wives can help their husbands in giving clear understanding of the Word to others, as Aquilla, Priscilla and Apollos (Acts 18:26).

- All sisters have at least one spiritual gift, as do all brothers (Rom.12:6-8; 1 Cor.12:7; Eph.4:7-8). "Men" in Ephesians 4 is saved-mankind, men and women. Women simply use their gift less publicly.

- Sisters can definitely teach children (2 Tim.1:5; 3:15).

- Euodias and Syntyche, in spite of their temporary disagreement, worked with the apostle Paul in the gospel (Phil.4:2-3).

- Experienced sisters should teach younger "good things" about married and home life (Tit.2:3-5).

- Sisters can open their homes for meetings (Acts 12:12).

- Sisters can gather for prayer with other women (Acts 16:13).

- Women can pray and prophesy (tell forth God's Word) among other women, both saved and unsaved: they can use their gift (1 Cor.14:5).

- Wives can pray with their husbands (1 Pet.3:7).

- Either a man or woman could take a Nazarite vow to separate himself or herself to the Lord (Nu.6:1-2). God wants separated, reliable, useful people!

Some Devoted Women of the Bible

- Sarah, called a holy woman, obeyed her husband, Abraham (1 Pet.3:5-6).

- Deborah, was a gifted prophetess (Jud.4:5) under her own palm tree.

- Jochobed, Moses' mother, had great faith (Ex.2:9; 6:20).

- Daughters of Zelophehad desired and obtained their inheritance (Num.27:1-7).

- Rahab the harlot became a godly mother in Israel (Josh.6:25).

Ashsah, the daughter of Caleb, desired a blessing from her father (Jud.1:12-15).

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Ruth committed herself to God and His people (Ruth 1:16-17).

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Hannah was a praying mother who became a praising mother (1 Sam.1-2:12).

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Abigail was a woman of understanding (1 Sam.25:3).

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Hulah was a prophetess in her Jerusalem home (2 Ki.22:14).

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The virtuous woman of Proverbs 31:10-31 shows God's ideal in a woman and her many-faceted work in and out of the house for her family.

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Mary, the mother of Jesus, was devoted to God (Lk.2).

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Elizabeth, Mary's cousin, likewise (Lk.2).

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Anna, an aged widow, was serving in her temple lodging (Lk.2:36-38).

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Mary of Bethany anointed the Lord's feet (Jn.12:3).

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Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna and others ministered to the Lord of their material things (Lk.8:2-3). Mary took the resurrection message to the brethren (Jn.20:17-19).

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Philip's four daughters prophesied (Acts 21:9).

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Phoebe was a servant of the assembly at Cenchrea (Rom.16:1).

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Priscilla was of great help to her husband in serving the Lord in Corinth, Ephesus and Rome, as well as having the assembly in her home (Acts 18:2-3, 24-26; Rom.16:3-4).

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Lois and Eunice, Timothy's grandmother and mother, taught him the Scriptures (Acts 16:1-3; 1 Tim.1:5).

Bob Costen—Reprinted from the Assembly Messenger