

1 CORINTHIANS 11 – HEAD COVERINGS AND COMMUNION

11:3 - Headship and Authority

- “A head covering was a sign or symbol pointing to a greater reality. It had no meaning in itself, but was a concrete expression of an intangible truth. Thus, Paul isn’t concerned with head coverings *per se*. Rather, he’s concerned with the meaning that wearing a head covering conveys.”
- **Headship.** “Being in a position of leadership or guidance. Headship has to do with God’s relation to this created world, and to his ordering of relationships within it.
- **Authority.** “The right to act or speak in certain ways, in accordance with the authorization of a higher power”
- “Christians should live as individuals and in corporate worship in light of the perfect unity and interrelatedness of the persons of the Godhead.” Spiritual authority and headship is to be exercised with gentleness, respect, love, patience, and kindness.

11:4-5a – The stipulations of when to or not to wear one

- The wearing of head coverings is limited to times of prayer or prophecy.

11:5b-16 - Paul’s defense for head coverings

- v5b-6 – **An argument from cultural norms**
- v7-9 – **An argument from creation**
- V10 – **An argument due to the angels**
- V13-15 – **Argument from nature**
- V16 – **Argument from custom**

Our Conclusion:

1. This isn’t a salvation issue. It’s open handed, but don’t lose sight of what the symbol represents. If there is a problem with authority and headship, maybe it’s a really good reason to wear a covering.
2. Glorify God in every choice. 1 Cor. 10:31
3. Listen to the Holy Spirit. James 4:17
4. Don’t pressure or judge others for the decision they make. In whatever choice you make, do it in faith and confidence. Romans 14:3, 23
5. Seek the Lord in prayer. Talk with mature believers. Talk it through with your spouse.

11:17-34 – Communion/the Lord’s Supper

11:17-22 – The problem.

- There were schisms in the church between the social classes. “The poorer members were humiliated, since those better off ate the food and drink they furnished instead of sharing it or ate the best portions provided from the common fund before the poorer (workers) could arrive¹.”

11:23-26 – The Ordinance. What it’s all about.

- “**cup** Refers to the cup of blessing used in the Passover meal, which symbolized the blood of the covenant (Exod 24:8; Luke 22:20¹)”
- **Bread** “was normally interpreted figuratively as the bread of affliction that our ancestor’s ate in Moses time¹” and which as a whole referred to their time as slaves in Egypt.
- **new covenant** Refers to the covenant that fulfilled and replaced the Mosaic covenant (see Jer 31:31–34; 32:40; Exod 24¹)”

11:27-34 - Consequences and stipulations

- The bottom line, Paul writes, is that God is disciplining them for their misjudgment on the other believers, which we know were the schisms in the church due to class differences. Paul says if they didn’t judge each other, then there wouldn’t be discipline from God (31). But since they did judge and mistreat one another, God disciplined them (32).

As a result of their misconduct, many believers were facing some severe consequences:

- V30 – Getting weak, sick, and dying – of which Paul meant when it says sleeping (Luke 8:52; John 11:13; Acts 7:60)
- v27 - “guilty of the body and blood” – They were treating the memory of Christ’s sacrifice in the same way as those who originally crucified and rejected him. They are making a mockery of it. They were treating it in an unworthy manner, that is, they were being irreverent and making a mockery of the cross.

In response to their actions, Paul gives them some stipulations for each person to observe before their next meal and partaking of communion:

- V28 – “Examine themselves.” “**examine** Refers to testing or proving to be genuine¹”.
- V33 – Wait for one another. Phil 2:3-4
- V34 – If you’re that hungry, eat before you arrive.