

I Corinthians 11:1-16
An emphasis on Gender

- For more material on related subjects see apptoteach.org theology file #407

When you see a woman wearing a hat in church what do you conclude?

- ✓ She is subject to her husband.
- ✓ She is a woman not a man.
- ✓ She is married and not single.
- ✓ She has authority to pray and prophesy in the church.
- ✓ She is old fashioned and traditional.

I Corinthians 11:1-16

“¹ Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

“² Now I praise you because you remember me in everything, and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you. ³ But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and **the man is the head of a woman**, and God is the head of Christ.”

- ✓ **Headship is not a put down.**

Ephesians 5:22-23

“²² Wives, **be subject** to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

“²³ For the husband is the **head** of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.”

- ✓ **There can be little doubt that “headship” is related to “subjection” in this text.**
- ✓ **The model of headship is Christ as self sacrificing savior.**

Colossians 1:18

“And he (Christ) is the **head** of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the **supremacy**.”

- ✓ **“Headship” means “origin” in this text and is also related to “supremacy” (holding the first place). The issue is “position” not “essence.”**
- ✓ **Headship for the man suggests “taking the lead in responsibility” rather than being superior.**

I Corinthians 11:1-16

“⁴ Every man who has {something} on his head while praying or prophesying, disgraces his head.

⁵ But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying, disgraces her head; for she is one and the same with her whose head is shaved. ⁶ For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head.”

- ✓ **Cultural Symbols may change but the reasons for them do not.**

Some facts to consider.

- ✓ Head covering was a Jewish but not a Greek custom in Paul's day.
- ✓ Before the 4th century, head covering was applied to all women in the East, & to wives only in the West.
- ✓ In Paul's day, all women were under the authority of some man, (husband, father, relative).

I Corinthians 11:1-16

"⁷ For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. ⁸ For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; ⁹ for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake. ¹⁰ Therefore the woman ought to have {a symbol of} authority on her head, because of the angels."

- ✓ **God's created purpose shapes our nature and ministry.**

Genesis 2:18

"Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a **helper suitable for him.**"

- ✓ **"Helper" is a term used of God and suggests "a powerful, and needed" role for the woman.**
- ✓ **"Suitable" means corresponding or appropriate.**

Characteristics of Occasional teaching

- ✓ Isolated to a particular time and place - **concubines, head covering?**
- ✓ Meaningful in a narrow context - **meat offered to idols**
- ✓ Rare references with little illustration of actual practice - **foot washing**
- ✓ Violation of clearly stated principles - **baptism for the dead**

Characteristics of Universal teaching

- ✓ Consistency across Biblical cultures - **sanctity of life**
- ✓ Universal setting - **water baptism**
- ✓ Appeal to a permanent factor - **marriage**
- ✓ Both commanded and practiced consistently - **evangelism**
- ✓ Final position within progressive revelation - **Sabbath, tithing**

Proverbs 11:16 (LXX)

"A gracious wife brings **glory to her husband**, but a woman hating righteousness is a throne of dishonor."

- ✓ **"Glory" is associated with a person's essence or position.**
- ✓ **The husband's position as "head" is enhanced or discredited by the conduct of his wife.**

I Corinthians 11:1-16

"¹¹ However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. ¹² For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man {has his birth} through the woman; and all things originate from God."

- ✓ **The complementary nature of gender relationships is vital to keeping a healthy balance.**

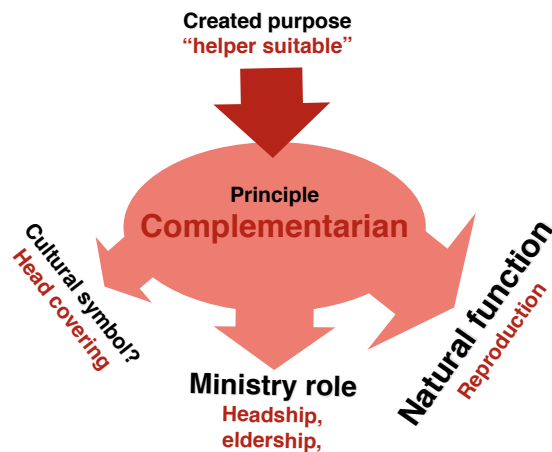
The **Complementarian** view of Gender

- ✓ **Man and woman are created equal in value and dignity.**
- ✓ **Man and woman have distinct and different roles in marriage and some aspects of public ministry as prescribed by Scripture.**
- ✓ **While these differences can be misunderstood and abused they should not be ignored.**
- ✓ **These differences are important but not fundamental to the Christian faith.**

I Corinthians 11:1-16

“¹³ Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God {with 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. ¹⁶ But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God.”

- ✓ **Nature reminds us of gender distinctives.**



The point of this text

**Gender distinctives
are important
and are to be reflected
in cultural symbols.**

Closing thoughts

- ✓ **Gender distinctives are to be played up not played down in the church.**
- ✓ **Head coverings are symbolic not functional and are therefore more likely to be regarded as occasional.**
- ✓ **Because the teaching on "head-covering" is not clear, fundamental, or functional it has not been regarded as a major issue.**

Gender distinctives are worth celebrating.

- ✓ **Headship**
- ✓ **Symbols**
- ✓ **Purpose**
- ✓ **Complement**
- ✓ **Nature**