

## The Role of the Godly Woman

1 Corinthians 11:7-16

1845

Turn to 1 Corinthians 11. We're going to get back to this very interesting text that we've entitled "The Subordination and Equality of Women." I thought of a subtitle for this morning, "Hair, the Long and Short of It," but I (*Laughter*) decided not to use that just now.

This chapter is very interesting. I want all of you to please remain until I'm finished this morning and not duck your head or be inclined to leave until I'm finished. This is a very interesting passage. We're going to find some very interesting truth, I'm sure, applied perhaps in a way you'd never really understood it before.

As we remember from last week, we began a look in our ongoing study of 1 Corinthians at the 11th chapter, beginning with verse 2 and going through verse 16 as a unit a Scripture dealing with the subordination and equality of women in the church. Let me begin with some introductory remarks, a brief review, and then get into the text that we didn't cover last time.

I think all of us are very much aware from what we have learned together in the Scripture that women have a vital place in the life of the church. There's no question about this. They're indispensable to the ministry of the church. They are exalted in their role in the church. In Psalms 68:11, as far back as that, it talks about their usefulness in evangelism as it tells us "the women that publish the tidings are a great host."

In Romans 16:2 we learn about their ministry to the saints. Speaking of Phebe, Paul says, "I commend unto you Phebe our sister who is a minister--or the akenon--a servant of the church at Cenchrea." In 1 Timothy 3:11 we learn about deaconesses, a group of women approved of and set aside for spiritual service within the church. Further on in the Word of God in that same letter, 1 Timothy 5, we read about widows. There were groups of widows, over 60 years of age, who because they had washed the saints' feet and because they had been hospitable and because they had done good works and had proved themselves spiritually in the eyes of the church community, were added to a list of such widows to be used in ministry to others within the church.

It has always been a vital part of the church, both in evangelism and in the ministry of the saints to one another, that women be involved. Immediately after our Lord's ascension, women gathered along with the apostles and the disciples in the upper room and as such were involved, surely, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the proclamation of the speaking in tongues and in the declaration of the wonderful works of God. So they were used there in a proclaiming ministry.

In Acts 5:14, in response to the teaching of the Word, it says, "A multitude were added to the church, both of men and women." They are vitally connected to the life of the church. They are gift of the

Holy Spirit with the spiritual gift as well as men are, to be used in interchange with the body of Christ for the ongoing life and maturity of the saints.

One of the early converts, Mary, the mother of John Mark, gave her house as meeting place for the saints in Jerusalem. Lydia, another lady who lived in Philippi, also opened her home in the same fashion. There was hospitality that was granted through the ministry of women. In the last chapter of Romans, where Paul names 26 individuals who are singled out for a very significant service to Christ, 8 of them are honored women.

Women have always had a vital place in the life of the church. In Acts 21, we read that the daughters of Philip were used to prophesy. We read that Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, were used to instruct Apollos more perfectly in the knowledge of the Lord in Acts 18. We even hear in our own passage that "the woman is man's glory." I Corinthians 11:7

There's no question about the fact that there is an equality among men and women in a spiritual dimension when in the life of the church. Galatians 3:28, as we saw last time, says, "In Christ there is neither male nor female." There is that equality there.

And yet even though there is a spiritual equality, and even though there is an essential equality--that is in terms of essence or personhood--there is a difference in role that God has divinely assigned to men and women. God is careful to maintain this difference and this distinction both in the church and in the home and in society in general.

I believe that we need to abide by these principles. We do not conceive of women as anything less than men. Quite the contrary. Women are in every sense equal to men. In every sense there is equality there except in the area of the assignment of a role or a duty within the framework of society. I feel, too, that when we put women in responsibilities or when women usurp responsibilities meant for men they thus misuse their divine design and forfeit the use of their highest capacity.

In spite of what the Word of God says, and in spite of what the Bible teaches very clearly about this, some people in the church today are fighting for so-called equality of women. We're not even denying that. That isn't even the debate. I think the fact that anybody would fight for the equality of women assumes that once they didn't think there was such a thing, or at least it's a condescending act. We don't even discuss whether women are equal or not. That's obvious.

What we must maintain in this is that there is equality but a difference in the assignment which God has given to a man and a woman. Each is equally important. Each is vitally important. Authority can't function without submission, and submission can't function without authority. They are mutually dependent.

Such a doctrine as this doctrine of authority and submission--men are in authority, women are in submission in general--is not a confining thing for women but rather is designed by God to accommodate the makeup of a woman, which God Himself has created. Interestingly enough, in its time, when Christianity arrived on the scene, women were thought of as slaves or as animals. In fact, a male Jew used to pray that he was thankful that he hadn't been born one of three things--a Gentile, a woman, or a slave. They all fell into similar categories.

In the Roman and the Greek world, it takes very little study at all to determine that women were thought purely as slaves, purely as animals and nothing more--not allowed to make any contribution beyond that of servitude. When Christianity came along and announced equality of women spiritually, equality of women in personhood, equality of women in capacity and so forth, this was liberating. This was not confining. When it maintained the distinction in roles, it was also not confining women, but it was helping women and men to see their God-ordained design and therefore be able to fulfill it with a commitment.

It is true that in ancient Rome, as in many different periods of history in Western culture, there have been feminists or women's liberation movements. In America, we have gone through several of them, historically known as "suffrage" movements. Modern terminology is different. It's the same idea. It comes about in these cases, because there is a misunderstanding or not a true teaching of Christianity, and consequently, there are abuses that occur in society.

In the Roman society, for example, women were definitely abused. Out of the abuses there grew a feminist movement. In some senses, we would agree that it was justifiable. When Christianity came along and truly liberated women, that feminist attitude should never have carried into the church, but it did. In fact, if you study the feminist movement of ancient Rome, you will find that they had all of the characteristics of the feminist movements of all of the times in history, most all of them, and of today.

For example, women were stating their independence in those days by leaving home, by living with other men, by refusing to have children, or if they had children refusing to care for them, by demanding jobs always held by men, by wearing men's clothes and discarding all signs of femininity, by violating their marriage vows, by seeking independence in general, etc., etc. All of the things that were characteristic of that time in feminist movements are pretty much what's going on today.

So it was that culture had brought abuses to womanhood, and womanhood was reacting to the cultural abuses. Christianity came in and truly set women free to be what God designed them to be, recognizing their equality in every dimension except in the assignment of a role within society's framework. Consequently, when that is understood, there should not have been any feminist movement within the framework of Christianity. There never should be. It's ridiculous.

If you're going to deny that women are to be submissive to men, then you must deny the church is to be submissive to Christ, and that Christ was to be submissive to the Father in His incarnation, because that in I Corinthians 11:3 is the statement that lays at the basis of all of it.

A woman's liberation movement had filtered into the church at Corinth, and it was a reaction to the abuses that even when they became Christians, they had somehow dragged that into the church. They were demanding their own independence, and they were sort of plotting their freedom in the church--certain Christian women abusing Christian liberty.

Remember, there's one key to keep in mind in this whole thing. We're going to cover a lot of ground this morning, so you're going to really have to get your head screwed on tight so nothing leaks out. Remember this: Apparently in their society, a veil or a covering of some kind over the head was regarded by the people as the common, ordinary, customary symbol of modesty and submission, OK?

To the Corinthian society, a woman was seen as submissive and modest and feminine when she was covered in public assembly. Removing that covering in public assembly was a sign that she was making a statement. Women who did that were falling into one of two categories generally, for the most part. No. 1, they were feminists making a protest. We know in those days that feminists did two things in that culture--discarded their covering and shaved their hair short like a man. They were thus making a statement about their wanting to be equal to men. Feminists threw away their veils.

Secondly, prostitutes did. Obviously, prostitutes couldn't drum up a lot of business unless somebody knew what they looked like, so they discarded their veils for the sake of their occupation. When the Christians came along and said, "Look, we're equal in Christ. We can throw our veils away," they therefore were outwardly identifying themselves with either a feminist protest or prostitution. It was a very tragic thing to bring such a reproach upon the church. Paul writes this chapter in the main part to say to the Corinthian women, "Keep your veils on, ladies. This is a very important thing that you do in your culture, because it is making the statement to your culture that you recognize that a woman is to be modest and submissive and that she is under the authority of a man. Identify with that in your society."

It's interesting enough. This is a very broad point. We don't have veils in our society, but there are certain things in our society that identify people. The way you dress, and the way you appear, you identify with a certain aspect of our society, and you want to be sure that you're identifying with the one that will bring honor to you and to Christ, not reproach upon both. Right.

Let's look at verse 3. We're going to just review very quickly, and then we're going to get into the part we didn't cover last time. I want to make some further comment as we review that we didn't cover as well.

There are many points here dealing with this principle of authority and submission. Let's go to verse 3, the principle stated. We discussed this last time. The principle stated: "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."

Here Paul says, "Look, there's something new that I want you to know." What it is, is this--that built in to every dimension of personality relationships is an authority-submission principle. It's true on a human level. Man is the head of woman. It's true on the human-divine level. Christ is the head of the church. It's true on the totally divine level. The Father is the head of the Son.

God has designed it in every aspect of relationship from the lowest level of humankind to Himself that there be some in authority and some who respond in submission and subjection. It does not have anything to do with inequality. It does not have anything to do with inferiority. It has only to do with a different assignment in terms of function.

The woman is not inferior to the man. The man is not inferior to even Christ, his head, because God sees the man in Christ, and Christ is certainly not inferior to God. He is God. There is a different in assignment.

So he says, "There is a principle here. The principle is that there is authority and submission. When it

gets down to our level, the man has authority, and the woman is to be in the place of submission." Further, remember that I said this: It is an authority-submission concept based on love, not tyranny. The Father loved the Son, the Son loved the Father. Christ loves the church, the church loves Christ. The husband loves the wife, the wife loves the husband. The authority and submission interchanges on the basis of love. Very important to recognize.

All right. The principle stated. The principle applied--verse 4. We went into this last time. I'll just remind you of it. Here he applies it to the Corinthian situation. "Every man then, praying or prophesying--" That's speaking to God about men or speaking to men about God. Any time he has any kind of ministry. It's assuming it's in a public assembly of some kind, not necessarily all Christians but some public assembly.

"The man, having his head covered, dishonors his head." In other words, he brings reproach on himself when he wears a covering on his head while he's ministering. Why? Because to the Corinthian mind, that is what a woman did. That would be like me today preaching with an Easter bonnet on. *(Laughter)* You would say, "Why is he doing that?" I have the liberty to wear an Easter bonnet if I want. *(Laughter)* I do not take that liberty, however, because you would misconstrue the meaning of it.

In a society like theirs, where there wasn't a difference in the particular style of clothes. They just threw something on. Women were identified as being covered and men were identified as being uncovered. For a man to cover himself was a shame to him. Incidentally, this is a brand-new thing for the Jewish men, who customarily had always prayed covered. The rabbis had taught them to wear a talif, and they always wore a prayer shawl when they prayed. The men did.

Paul is saying, "If you Jewish men do that, you are really going to confuse that society. They're going to think you are effeminate." For a man then to appear with a social sign of subjection, a social sign of submission on his head, submission to a man is a disgrace to that man. On the contrary, in verse 5, "A woman that prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head." In fact, at the end of verse 5 and verse 6, he says, "She might as well go ahead and shave herself bald for that matter." In other words, if she's going to be shameful about it, she might as well go the whole route and look like a protester, because the women in that day who were protesting in the feminist movement had clipped their hair short like a man.

"If you're going to take your veil off, go the whole route. You might as well identify with the whole deal, because in effect, that's the way people read it." He says, "Look, in your society, God wants the distinction clear. Men are men, and they are in authority. Women are women, and they are in submission. If your society has a norm by which that is manifest in a custom, then you abide by that custom." That's what he's saying.

That's very practical. All right. The principal stated and applied. Now let's pick it up where we left off--the principle defended, verses 7-10. The principle defended.

Verse 7. Now watch. Paul's given this principle. He's applied it to them, and now he's going to have to defend where it came from. "Where'd you get this idea, Paul? Why should we believe you?"

"For a man," verse 7, "indeed, truly, ought not to cover his head." "All right, you men, don't cover

your heads. Don't do it." Why? "Because he is the image and glory of God."

Now stop. Now listen. This goes beyond a cultural thing. This goes beyond something that is custom. "Men, don't cover your head in general, because you are the image and glory of God." That's a very strong, very broad statement. Man is to be uncovered in public, in praying, prophesying, ministering, acting in public, he is to be uncovered because of a divine reality connected with his creation. He was created to be the image and glory of God, and that glory is manifest as man is uncovered. Why? Because covering is a divine--watch it--a divine symbol of submission.

Covering means to be humble. It's a sign of humility. You're not bold-faced. You're not taking a leave. You're not stepping out. You're diminishing. Covering is the sign of that submissiveness.

"Man, you are to be uncovered. You are made in the image of God." Man when he was originally created was created in the moral image of God. He was created in the intellectual image of God. That is, he was created in righteousness and true holiness as Ephesians 4:24 says is restored when he comes back to Christ. He was created with intellect and will and emotion and knowledge and righteousness and holiness and as thus, he received the stamp of God's image.

"You are made in the image of God." Now watch this. "To be the glory of God." "What do you mean by that, John?" "I mean this: A man is the highest manifestation of God in the earth." Why? Because man has been given divine dominion. Man has been given divine dominion in the world.

In Genesis 1:26, I'll just read it to you. It tells us regarding this. "And God said let us make man in our image after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, and the cattle, over all the earth, over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." God created man in His own image. "In the image of God created He him. Then male and female created He them."

God created man initially to rule over everything in His world. He gave him dominion. Man is king of the earth. Throughout the history of humankind, men have ruled the world. They have run the governments. They have run the businesses. They have run the economics. They have run the education. They have run the social aspect. Men have been the ones in charge, because God originally invested within them dominion.

Man then becomes--and I don't mean generic man, I mean sexually male man, just the maleness of man--that man from the sexual viewpoint has been given the dominion of God. Man is a sovereign in the world. He is the delegated authority and majesty of God. That's why, for illustration's sake, it says in Ephesians 5:22, "Wives submit yourselves unto your husbands as unto--" What? "The Lord." Why the Lord? Because that man sits in the seat of dominion in the place of Christ.

Man has been given authority and with responsibility. As such, a man is never to wear on his head a mark of subjection, a mark of submission. You say, "But John, you said the Jews did." That's right. They did. They wore a covering when they prayed. "You say they shouldn't have done that?" No, I don't think they should've. You say, "Well why did they do that?" They did it, because the rabbis told them to do it, not the Bible. The Bible nowhere tells them to do that. The rabbis told them that.

You say, "Why did the rabbis tell them that?" Because the rabbis misinterpreted Exodus 33. Remember Exodus 33, Moses was up on the mountain and says, "Show me Your glory"? God says,

"I'll make My glory fast before you." He kept him in a mountain, His glory went by, Moses saw His glory, remember? Exodus 33, "And the glory of God got all over Moses' face, and he put on a veil, and he went down the hill and he talked to the children of Israel." The rabbis said, "You see, Moses was veiled when he was looking at the glory of God." Moses had to be veiled in the presence of God, so every Hebrew man must be covered in the presence of God.

No, no. They missed the whole point. Paul corrected it in II Corinthians 3:13. This is what he said: "Not as Moses who put a veil over his face." OK. Now listen. Why? "That the children of Israel could not look to the fading away of that glory," is what it means.

Now listen. He did not put on a veil in order to view the glory. He put on a veil in front of the children of Israel so they wouldn't see it depart from his face. By misrepresenting and misinterpreting that act of Moses, thinking that Moses had a veil on because of God's glory, when Moses had a veil on so they wouldn't see the glory fade, they then imposed on all of Israel a sign of submission to wear on their heads. Paul really is correcting that here. We assume that what happens in a Corinthian society is that there are people who move into that society and they're Jewish people. They've been scattered out of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. They've grown up in that city. They've had children. There are Jewish communities within the cities of the Roman Empire, particularly in Corinth. Some of these Jews get saved, so they come into the church, and when it's time to pray or speak, they put on a veil. The Corinthians say, "Look at them." That would be just like me wearing an Easter bonnet in the pulpit. It's the same idea. It would be a custom that would be totally unacceptable in the Corinthian society.

Paul is saying, "Look, ladies, keep your veil on. Men, take it off, because in your culture, that is a very confusing thing. Your culture must see a woman in a sign of submission and a man in a sign of authority. Don't confuse the issue."

Man, then, according to verse 7, "is the image and glory of God," but look at verse 7 again. Here comes the other part. "But the woman is--" not the glory of God but what? "The glory of man." Not even a definite article there. "Woman is glory of man." In other words--listen to this--in other words, the woman was made to manifest man's authority and man's will as man was made to manifest God's authority.

The woman is the vice regent who rules in the stead or who carries out man's wish, as man is the vice regent who carries out God's wish. That's why, you see, I Corinthians 14 says, "If a woman needs to know something, tell her to go--" Where? Ask whom? Her husband, because man is the sun, and woman is the moon. "She shines not so much with the direct light of God but that derived from man."

Listen, men, that is a grave responsibility. A woman's deepest and greatest spiritual resource is a man. A man. Vital. Yet in saving grace, a woman comes every bit as deeply into communion with God as any man and is equally restored to the image of God. Do you know that a woman is made equally in the image of God? Yes. "And created them male and female."

She is definitely in the image of God. She was created in the image of God in every whit, and that image is restored in Christ, and a woman will be just as much like Jesus Christ when we see Him face-to-face as a man will be. "But though a woman is in the image of God, a woman is not the glory

of God, she is not the outshining of God. She is the outshining of man."

She demonstrates her significance in the world in response to the direction of men who are given divine dominion. That's a general truth. That's a truth that goes beyond the walls of Christianity and the church. It's just in general.

Now let's go to verse 8 and 9 and see how Paul further defends this truth by speaking about creation. Verse 8: "For the man is not of the woman but the woman of the man." You know what that means? Which came first, the chicken or the egg? Which came first, the man or the woman? Man did. God made man first and gave him dominion and then created woman to be his helper. The man is not from the woman. The woman is from the man.

That's the beginning of it. Adam was in no way born of a woman. He was in no way derived from a woman. He was made directly by God. "And God took the dust of the ground and formed a man and breathed into him the breath of life and man became a living soul." God made man and woman was made from man.

He could've created them simultaneously, but He didn't. He didn't. Let me show you how it worked. Genesis 2. In Genesis 2 we ought to look at verse 18. This is what it says. "And the Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone.'" Genesis 2:18. "I will make a helper fit for him."

"It's not good that man should be alone. I'm going to make a helper fit for him." Verse 21. "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam." This is the first surgery we know anything about. Anesthetic. God shot him with a divine anesthetic, and he went out, and he slept. The Lord took out His supernatural scalpel, slit open his side, took one of his ribs out, "and closed up the flesh instead thereof." I doubt whether there was even a scar. "And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, out of it made He a woman and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, because of this, she was taken--'" What? "Out of man."

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they shall be one flesh." That proves that God never did justify polygamy. Never, never, never. Not at any time. People who committed it later on in Bible times suffered. "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."

After all, who was there to look, right? (*Laughter*) No. The reason they were not ashamed was because of the purity of their minds, purity of their hearts, and the sinlessness that they knew in the Garden.

All right. The man is not of the woman, but the woman is of the man. Now then. Man did not come from woman, but woman came from man. Keep these two things in mind. Woman was made from man for man. Woman was made from man for man.

Now let's go. The reverse is not true. Man was not made from woman or for woman. The origin of woman and her reason for being is God's clear statement that man is in authority, and she is in submission. This is no natural inferiority. This is no spiritual inferiority, no intellectual inferiority, no functional inferiority. Simply different roles designed by God.



Verse 9. "Neither was the man created for the woman but the woman for the man." That's the other side as we mentioned. Not from or for.

Now verse 10, tough verse. "For this cause ought the woman to have authority on her head because of the angels." Now what does it mean to have authority on your head? The New American Standard probably has the simplest, accurate translation of this. It says this. Listen carefully. "Therefore, the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head because of the angels."

Now listen to me. If a woman is to take the part of submission, then Paul says she ought to have a symbol of that submission on her head. Get that? She ought to have a symbol of that submission on her head. Paul has proved that woman is subordinate to man. He has shown that the veil was the convention Corinthian symbol of a man's authority over a woman, so he says, "You ought to wear that thing, because that's the conventional symbol of exzusia." That's the Greek word "authority."

That means you have a power over you. You have an authority over you. You have one who has responsibility. You should wear the symbol of that in that society, because that's what your society expects from a woman who recognizes that submission. There's even a broader base. He makes \_\_\_\_\_ a very general statement. "For this cause ought the woman to have authority on her head." Not just because it's the custom of the Corinthians but because of what? For the angels.

This gets hard. You say, "What do the angels have to do with this? How did they get into this thing?" Let me tell you something. There's one principal angels really recognize really well. There's one principal angels understand completely. There's on principal they never have to ask questions about. You know what that principal is? Authority and submission.

You read Hebrews chapter 1 and find how many times it tells us in there that angels are under the authority of God. It calls them "ministering spirits, serving spirit." It says, "The Son is here and the angels are here." To which of the angels has He ever said, "Sit here on my throne and rule?"

It says that Christ in verse 4 of Hebrews I "is a better name than angels." So they understand the authority of God and the submissiveness of their own service, and they look out for the church. We've learned that, haven't we, in our study of angels some months ago? They watch the church. They look at the church. They see the church. Why? Because they want to see reflected in the church the glory of God, the attributes of God, the wisdom of God. Read Ephesians 3. By looking at the church, the angels can see the wisdom of God.

God is saying, "Look, a woman should recognize her place of submission, and it should be clear from her lifestyle and her pattern that she is in submission to authority so that the angels in looking at the church shall be pleased with the church's submission to her Lord."

It's important for women to appear modest, to appear submissive, not just for the sake of public sentiment. That's important but not just for that sake but for reverence to a higher spiritual intelligences who would be definitely offended by a less than submission, because they understand submission to be right and proper and honoring to God. For the sake of the angels, that you might to the angels be a non-offense, and you might to the angels reveal the wisdom of God revealed in His church, abide by this principle.

So Paul states the principle, applies it, and defends it. Fourth, quickly, he harmonizes it. Verses 11-12. He harmonizes. The principle harmonized. Sometimes when you get a Bible principle, you get carried away out. Some of you by this time are saying, "I can't take this, man. You're getting a little carried away here on this deal." Well, we're going to pull you back a little. Here's the harmonizing or the balancing thing.

Verse 11: "Nevertheless--" that's a key word. Nevertheless limits or modifies the proceeding. Nevertheless--even though it is true that woman came out of man, she was from man and was made to help man, she is for man, even though she is in submission, "Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord."

Here he is talking about the church or Christianity in the Lord. Now listen to what he said. "In the church, in Christianity, in the church, men are dependent on women as much as women are dependent on men." The church desperately has to have its women function. You know something? To be frank about it, if the women didn't function, we'd be in bad shape. You know that? In most churches, they do most of the things that need to be done.

In Christianity, he's saying, in Christianity, in the Lord, women and men rise to the place of Galatians 3:28, "They are one in Christ. There is neither male nor female." They are equally dependent on each other. Spiritually, they become a resource to one another. Think about it. The widows in the church in history who minister to the saints, who wash the feet of the saints, who gave food and housing to the apostles, who taught the children, who blessed their own husbands, who carried out the role of a deaconess in the church, who published the truth of the Gospel. The women have always had a vital part in the life of the church.

In the Lord there is a beautiful equality that makes man and dependent on woman as woman is dependent on man. Mutually in the body of Christ do we all labor together for His glory as the body is edified, built up.

In the Lord, in Christianity, you can't say we don't need women. We can't be independent. We are incomplete without each other. There is a place of equality for her in the Christian church. There is a place of equality for her in Christ in every sense. That's the balance, see. It's only roles that we're talking about.

"Neither is the man without the woman and the woman without the man" in the Lord, in Christianity. Verse 12, "For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman." In other words, as the woman came out of Adam, so does every other man come out of Eve, born of woman. "And remember all things of God." In other words, God created it all, man and woman. Every woman is a gift of God. Every woman, a beautiful, loving gift of God.

When Jesus looked at His church, He said, "Father, I thank You that You've given them to Me." The church is a gift of God to the Lord. A woman is the gift of God to the man to carry out the ministry that God desires. That's the balance. Even though there's a difference in roles, there is a beautiful equality in the Lord, and there's a beautiful equality verse 12 says in procreation as women give birth to men.

I think the beauty of this comes out in I Timothy 2 at the end of a chapter where he says, "Even

though a woman is in subjection, she is saved by child bearing." In other words, let's face it. Every man born into the world has to come from a mother. She may be submissive to a man, but women are the ones who, for the most part, shape the men. Is that right? Because they have them in the years of their lives when the shaping is done.

That's how God harmonizes. That's how God balances the roles. Believe me, the highest, the pinnacle-- If these women in women's liberation really wanted to change the world to the way they like it, they ought to go home and raise their children to carry the thing they believe is right instead of trying to convince a bunch of people who won't be convinced.

The woman is saved in child bearing. That's the great high calling and honor that she bears, and it's all of God. Women, men, all divine creation.

All right. Now we come to the last part. The principle responded to, verse 13. Hang on. This is where it gets very interesting.

The principle responded to, verses 13-16. I'm going to do it quick, so stay with me. Verse 13: "Judge in yourselves--" "Come and make a decision"--yourselves is emphatic here in the Greek--"Do it yourself. You don't need me to give you all the answers. You just think it through. Think in your own mind. Make your own judgment. Is it proper that a woman pray to God uncovered? After everything I've said from verse 2 down to verse 12, all the things that I've pointed out that culturally or society says, 'This is the norm,' that God has said you are to maintain that submission in the face of your society. You tell me. You make a judgment. Should a woman pray uncovered?"

What's the answer? No. Can't. Can't do it. That's the only answer they could have. Then he goes further. "Let me say, let me go another step," he says. "It isn't even cultural. I'll take you further." Verse 14. "Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man have long hair it is a shame unto him, but if a woman have long hair, it is a glory for her?"

Stop there. Oh, now it really gets sticky. Paul says, "Let me get a little further beyond culture. Let me get superculture. Doesn't nature itself teach you something about this?" What do you mean by nature? The word is phoosis in the Greek. There's two possible ways to translate it. It can be translated nature. It can be translated instinct. I think it can be translated both. Let me show you why.

Doesn't nature tell you that if a man have long hair it's a shame to him, and a woman have long hair it's a glory to her? There's something in nature--now watch this--there's something in created physiology, there's something in human anatomy that should teach us that men are to have short hair and women are to have long hair. Hang on, folks. Don't leave me now. Think.

Some of you are saying, "Oh, thank God I have long hair." You're going to go out and go around the patio like you were spiritual. It just so happens we hit you at the time of year when you left it that way. Don't use this as an excuse to wear your spirituality on your head. That isn't the point. Those of you who have a little shorter hair, don't duck. We'll get to balancing this thing in a moment. For those men who have long hair right now, jeez, you can go cut it, but for the woman it's a long, excruciating thing to grow it.

Anyway, let's get to this so you understand what I'm saying. He says, "Nature teaches you." Let me

give you a little insight. Nature gives men shorter hair than women. Did you know that? Physiologically that is true. Just to verify that, because I believe that's what the Bible is saying, I had Ken Anderson, who is a scientist do some research on that, and he came up with some very interesting things about that.

Hair grows in a three-phase cycle. No. 1 in the cycle is the formation and growth of new hair. Secondly is the resting stage. Thirdly is the fallout stage. *(Laughter)* With which some of you are so well acquainted. *(Laughter)* So you have, beginningly, the formation and growth of new hair, the resting stage, and the fallout. Then after the fallout, the cycle starts all over again.

The male hormone, testosterone, speeds those three phases, so that quickly the man gets to phase three--fallout. That's why you see bald men but never see bald women. Aristotle said, "I have never seen a bald child, eunuch, or a woman." There's a reason for that. Testosterone, the male hormone, causes the speedup of the steps to get you quickly to step three. That retards the process of growth in a man.

The female hormone, estrogen, in the woman, causes the cycle to remain in stage one, the growth stage, longer than it does in a man. That's why a woman's hair will grow longer than a man's over the same period of time.

"Does not nature teach you?" Hasn't God put right into human physiology the truth that short hair belongs to men and long hair belongs to women? Interesting, isn't it? It's interesting. You all look so stunned. *(Laughter)*

All right now. Listen. I'm not through with you. The second term, phoosis, the second way it can be translated is by the word "instinct." Instinct means the instinctive sense of man as he recognizes what he sees in society. We're saying it isn't just physiological, but it's just plain obvious. Look around you in society. Isn't it obvious that men have shorter hair than women? Nature has made it so, and man has agreed to nature, and that's the way it is. Around the world and for all history, men have generally had shorter than women.

You can verify that, and you can cover a lot of ground historically. You'll see it verified. Now sometimes, men's hair was long enough to be at the shoulder, but the women's hair was down around the tops of the legs. Always there was the distinction. In ancient Rome, it was considered a mark of effeminacy to have long hair. It was ridiculed by Roman writers.

In later times, early church councils condemned men with long hair. Paul is saying, "The normal human pattern--" There were some exceptions--he Spartans and some philosophers of the past, and they still do today. For the most part we find some philosophers and other folks with long hair. Pagan tribes. Today we would add protesting types in our society, people who want to manifest nonacquiescence with the norms of society or want to show a little bit of rebellion and so forth. There have always been localized and temporary rebellions, but for the most part, the broad spectrum of history never violates the truth that men have shorter hair than women instinctively.

You say, "What are you trying to say to me, John?" I'm trying to say what the Bible says. Men are to have shorter hair than women. You say, "What does that mean to me?" I don't know what that means to you. Maybe it means go home and measure your hair against your husband's. You need to apply

that. You need to apply that.

God has designed it into human nature and human instinct that it is to be so. Thus Paul says, "Look, since God has already designed it that way, and God gave you your hair for a covering anyway," it says in verse 15, "It's given her for a covering."

"Since God has already wanted you covered, you shouldn't argue about wearing a veil. That just adds a little bit to what God has already designed, anyway." See? "So if that's what your culture says, go ahead and do it. It's kind of interesting that your culture says that, because it really just accommodates the covering God has given you, anyway."

You see? The universal principle is there, and so is the local custom. This isn't telling you to wear a veil. You say, "What is it telling me?" I think the universal truth is that women are to have longer hair than men. Don't you see it there? What else can we say? There's no other way.

It's interesting to note that because of this passage it's still customary in many places for women to wear hats. That isn't the point. The point is not in our culture, it isn't a sign of submission to wear a hat for a woman. It's not a sign of anything. There are some ways that you can dress to appear submissive and modest and feminine, but basically, the God-given, universal is that your hair is to be distinct. Isn't that interesting? Your hair is to be distinct.

It isn't necessarily that we're going to say, "From now on all Christian men will have Marine cuts." *(Laughter)* No. I'm not going to determine where that length is. I just want you to realize the Biblical principle and make the application. God has given long hair to women by nature, by instinct, as a covering signifying a woman's submissiveness, and God has given man short hair that he might manifest the divine dominion of God in the visible openness of short hair.

Paul says, "You ought to abide by this. In Corinth, you sure shouldn't argue about it, since their little custom of wearing or not wearing veils simply accents what God has already designed, anyway." You say, "That's really interesting." Yes, it is. Some of you might be saying, "I don't like it. I don't see the point. I'm going to leave my hair the way it is. If you think I'm getting up every morning and doing all that jazz to my hair, I'm going to whip that thing and go out. I'm busy. I don't want my hair long."

Well, OK. Verse 16 was written with that in mind. "If any of you seem to be contentious--" *(Laughter)* You see, Paul has been around, folks. *(Laughter)* He knows all about human response. He knows exactly what somebody was going to say. "If any of you seem to be contentious, and you want to argue against this, then," he says, "we have no such custom. Neither the churches of God."

"If you're looking for somebody on your side, it won't be the apostles, and it won't be anybody in the churches." See? "It is the universal agreement of the apostles. It is the universal agreement of the churches that this is what God has said. If you want to fight against it, you're not going to find any sympathetic ears among us or the other churches."

That's pretty straight stuff. Pretty straight stuff. If you want to argue, you're going to be all alone. You can look the Bible all over, and you're not going to find it, because the custom didn't belong to the apostles, it didn't belong to the churches. Want to hear something interesting? We have found sculptures and etchings and carvings of people in the early church, particularly we found them in the

catacombs. In every case, we find the men have short hair, and the women have longer hair. That was the custom in the early church, and I think that was right. I think that was as it should be. That's the universal thing that I see here.

That's what God wants. In addition to that universal, God wants us to be sure that we accommodate the customs of our society to appear to be the kind of people who are the way God designed us to be--submissive women, modest, feminine. Men who are taking the place that God has given them, being willing to be a sovereign, being willing to be responsible, and being willing to be masculine. That's God's design.

That's why way back in Deuteronomy 22:5 it says that a woman is not to wear that which appertains to a man and the reverse as well. God wants the rules distinct. Why? Because it's a universal thing, people. If people can understand the submission of a woman to a man, maybe they'll understand the submission of the church to Christ. You see? And of Christ to God.

If we start messing it up at any point, then we're going to lose it all. It's a vital thing. You take to heart what the spirit of God says to you, and please, as I said earlier, don't go running around because you have long hair thinking you're spiritual. You might be, but that isn't it. Or because you have short hair you can't come back to church for the next eight weeks. I don't want you to do that. I want you to think about it. I want you to pray about it. I want you to deal with it as God reveals it to your own heart as He has to mine. Let's see where the spirit of God leads in your life. I'll leave that up to Him and to you. Let's pray.

Thank You, Father, for our time this morning. It's been fresh and different and exciting to really grapple with something very practical, as practical as getting up every morning and looking in the mirror, facing the reality of this issue. We don't know what the Holy Spirit is meaning to say to every individual, but the principles are here, as Paul gave them to Corinth, and the application will be carried out as we submit to the Holy Spirit.

We don't want to be ritualistic, and we don't want to be legalistic. We don't want to function in terms of appearance and look to be holy or unholy. We know that how long or short our hair is has nothing to do with that. Father, if it's going to be the sign that You want, the thing that You gave, may there be a difference, whatever that difference ought to be, not only in the length of it but in the way it's prepared, the way it's done, that there might be a clear distinction.

Help us to design and maintain that distinction. Help us who are men to take the responsibility, the authority, the spiritual oversight and the women to take that role of submission, not that they can't be equal in spiritual things or intellectual things or hold equal jobs or equal privileges but when it comes to the spirit of the thing, they recognize that God has given them to be helpers. And yet in child bearing to really rule in the forming period of life for every man.

Thank You for how You balanced this thing. We know now why women are the ones that have the children, in order to balance the principle. Help us, Father, to be obedient, submissive at this point. We give you praise in Christ's name. Amen.

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