

# The Role of Woman in the Body of Christ (Church)

## 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:1-16 (KJV)

To understand this passage properly one must recognize that it is based on Creation principles and Corinthian social customs. Adam and Eve were created mutually (equally) independent as stated in verse 11. Together they are humanity in its completed form. The order and design in their creation (v.7) and the headship of Jesus Christ (v.3) reveals the glory of God. In verse 7 the woman is the glory of man, created as man's companion (v.9) and endowed with a nature to match her role (v.15). These creation truths were combined with the social custom of all women covering their heads in public. Both the spiritual Truths and the cultural habits became the essence that does not deal with a physical covering of the head, but a woman's submissive inner self that included being submissive to her husband. If a woman appeared bare headed in public, having uncovered hair or a shaved head, she could symbolize a decadent, loose or unclean condition (Lev.14:8,9; Num.5:18). Therefore, the emphasis of this passage is the disgrace of a woman's submissiveness in public worship.

<sup>1</sup> Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

<sup>2</sup> Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

For man to serve in his God appointed role as leader, he must understand the functions of that role. In this verse the word "head" is translated "woman's source" or "reason for living." Suggested in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:3, man's leadership role in the smallest government unit of society, the family, was ordained by God. God provided a divinely functional plan for social order, putting the obligation of leadership on man's shoulders. This does not imply that man is to lord over the woman, but he is to protect her under God's authority (opening a door, etc). This verse does not mean that man is superior to the woman, but that they each have different roles in this life on earth. As man applies the principle of godly leadership, harmony, peace and abundance, will be experienced in the home, nation and world.

There were many women in the Bible that God called upon for major rolls. In the Old Testament (Judg.4:1-24) God called upon Major Judge Deborah, to lead Israel out of twenty years of oppression. In the New Testament we all know of the rolls of Mary and Elizabeth. Do you think that if God considered a woman to be submissive to man, that He would call upon so many women in the Bible for major rolls?

<sup>4</sup> EVERY MAN PRAYING OR PROPHECYING, HAVING HIS HEAD COVERED, DISHONOURETH HIS HEAD.

<sup>5</sup> BUT EVERY WOMAN THAT PRAYETH OR PROPHECIETH WITH HER HEAD UNCOVERED DISHONOURETH HER HEAD: FOR THAT IS EVEN ALL ONE AS IF SHE WERE SHAVEN.

<sup>6</sup> For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

<sup>7</sup> For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

<sup>8</sup> For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man.

<sup>9</sup> Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

<sup>10</sup> For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.

<sup>12</sup> For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

<sup>13</sup> Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

<sup>14</sup> Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

<sup>15</sup> But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

<sup>16</sup> But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14 King James Version (KJV)**

<sup>33</sup> For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

<sup>34</sup> LET YOUR WOMEN KEEP SILENCE IN THE CHURCHES: FOR IT IS NOT PERMITTED UNTO THEM TO SPEAK; BUT THEY ARE COMMANDED TO BE UNDER OBEDIENCE AS ALSO SAITH THE LAW.

<sup>35</sup> AND IF THEY WILL LEARN ANY THING, LET THEM ASK THEIR HUSBANDS AT HOME: FOR IT IS A SHAME FOR WOMEN TO SPEAK IN THE CHURCH.

Although these two verses are subject to debate, perhaps the best interpretation is that Paul was not forbidding women to manifest spiritual gifts in his service, but he prohibited undisciplined behavior and discussion that would interrupt the service.

<sup>36</sup> What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

<sup>37</sup> If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:8-15 (KJV)**

<sup>8</sup> I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

<sup>9</sup> In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

<sup>10</sup> BUT (WHICH BECOMETH WOMEN PROFESSING GODLINESS) WITH GOOD WORKS.

<sup>11</sup> LET THE WOMAN [wife] LEARN IN SILENCE WITH ALL SUBJECTION.

<sup>12</sup> BUT I SUFFER NOT A WOMAN TO TEACH, NOR TO USURP AUTHORITY OVER THE MAN, BUT TO BE IN SILENCE.

<sup>13</sup> FOR ADAM WAS FIRST FORMED, THEN EVE.

<sup>14</sup> AND ADAM WAS NOT DECEIVED, BUT THE WOMAN BEING DECEIVED WAS IN THE TRANSGRESSION.

<sup>15</sup> NOTWITHSTANDING SHE SHALL BE SAVED IN CHILDBEARING, IF THEY CONTINUE IN FAITH AND CHARITY AND HOLINESS WITH SOBRIETY.

These verses preclude woman (wife) from expressing and teaching their own false doctrines of belief, taking authority over men (husband). Paul exhorts women to be disciples of Christ and conduct themselves so as not to discredit the Church. He does not prohibit woman from educating, proclaiming, prophesying, or encouraging the truth. The Bible does not assign rigid social or church rolls to men and women.

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