

GOD IS A GOD OF ORDER

TEXT: I CORINTHIANS 11:1-16

INTRODUCTION:

1. God is a God of order. The Bible says, “Let all things be done decently and in order” (I Cor. 14:40). God has His own order within the Godhead itself (11:3b). They are co-equal, but there is an order.
2. Chapter 11 begins with the apostle Paul saying, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (11:1).
3. Albert Barnes says, “This verse belongs to the previous chapter, and should not have been separated from it. It is the close of the discussion there.”
4. First Corinthians 11:1 concludes Paul’s teachings in chapter 10 – “Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit...” (10:33). We are to imitate Paul’s example, because we follow Christ when we follow Paul’s example (11:1).
5. A new section begins with verse 2 – “Now...” The theme now is order (cf. 11:3; cf. *Scofield Study Bible*).
6. “That ye remember me in all things” (11:2) refers to Paul’s authority as an apostle (cf. 9:1, 2). The phrase "all things" (11:2) means all things pertaining to the proper order in the church.
7. The word “ordinances” (11:2) is usually translated “traditions,” and the word is often used in a negative way. For example, Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees, “Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition” (Matthew 15:6).
8. However, the word is sometimes used in a positive way. Paul said in II Thessalonians 2:15, “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.”
9. Here in I Corinthians 11:2, it is used the same way as in II Thessalonians 2:15 – “keep the ordinances (traditions), as I delivered them to you.”
10. John Phillips says that the word “ordinances” here refers to church order and the two church ordinances, baptism and the Lord’s Supper.
11. As we study this passage, we need to remember that God is a God of order.

1. **THE PRINCIPLE OF HEADSHIP**
2. **THE HEADSHIP OF MAN**

3. THE SUBMISSION OF WOMAN

I. THE PRINCIPLE OF HEADSHIP

1. The principle of headship is introduced in verse 3.
2. “The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”
3. In the Bible, in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, the word “head” means, “master, ruler, or chief.”
4. Numbers 17:3 says, “And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi: for one rod shall be for the head of the house of their fathers.”
5. Numbers 25:15 says, “And the name of the Midianitish woman that was slain was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur; he was head over a people, and of a chief house in Midian.”
6. Moses said to the nation Israel in Deuteronomy 28:13, “And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath.”
7. Judges 10:18 says, “And the people and princes of Gilead said one to another, What man is he that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.”
8. Judges 11:8 says, “And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore we turn again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.”
9. Then Judges 11:11 says, “the people made him head(Jephthah) and captain over them.”
10. In I Samuel 15:17, Samuel said to King Saul, “When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?”
11. In II Samuel 22:44, King David said, “Thou hast kept me to be head of the heathen: a people which I knew not shall serve me.”
12. In the New Testament, the word “head” is used in a similar way, that is in the sense of lord, ruler, or chief. Referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, Ephesians 1:22 says, “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.”
13. Ephesians 4:15 says, “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.”
14. Ephesians 5:23 says, “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.”

15. Colossians 2:10 says, “And ye are complete in him (Christ), which is the head of all principality and power.”
16. These Scriptures teach that Christ is our Ruler and Lord. “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ” (I Cor. 11:3).

II. THE HEADSHIP OF MAN (11:3)

1. “And the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” (11:3). Of course, the head of the woman is Christ. What Paul is saying is that in society, in the church, and in the home, “the head of the woman is the man.”
2. Back in Genesis 3:16, God said to Eve, “Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.”
3. The headship of man does not mean that the man is superior to the woman, because just as the head of the woman is the man; “the head of Christ is God” (11:3). God is a God of order.
4. The wife is to be subordinate to the husband. First Peter 3:1 says, “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands.”
5. Men and women are equal, just as Christ and God the Father are equal (11:3). But God has an order, and this is a matter of subjection. Galatians 3:28 says, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” We are all equal before God.
6. The Lord Jesus Christ has consented to assume a subordinate rank. Hebrews 10:9 says, “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.”
7. Philippians 2:7, 8 says Christ “took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”
8. As an obedient Son, the Lord Jesus Christ submitted to God the Father. Before going to the cross, Jesus prayed, “Not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42).
9. Albert Barnes said, “The sense is, that Christ, throughout his entire work, regarded himself as occupying a subordinate station to the Father; and that it was proper from his example to recognize the propriety of rank and station everywhere.”

III. THE SUBMISSION OF WOMAN

1. Though this is rejected by most worldly people today, the Bible clearly teaches that the woman is subordinate to the man (11:3).
2. Ephesians 5:22, 23 says, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.”
3. First Peter 3:1 says, “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.”
4. John Phillips wrote, “The rise of the feminist movement in our culture has made this portion of Scripture a veritable battleground...Paul is writing under the direct inspiration and illumination of the Holy Spirit, who certainly knows what is best for the church He created, and who makes no mistakes” (*Exploring 1 Corinthians*).
5. “And the head of the woman is the man” (11:3) does not imply male superiority, nor does it imply female inferiority. God has certain roles for the man, and certain roles for the woman.
6. When men and women rebel against these roles, there is chaos and confusion (promiscuity, divorce, abortion, broken homes, homosexuality, “transgenderism,” etc.).
7. John Phillips says, “The feminist lobby, for all its noise, anger, organization, and resentment, is not going to change the way things are” (*Exploring 1 Corinthians*).
8. Phyllis Schlafly died on September 5, 2016. She was a constitutional lawyer, author of many books, and a conservative activist. Her husband was also an attorney and they had six children.
9. Phyllis Schlafly said, “The feminist movement has had an immense effect on American culture, laws, education and social relationships. A principal tenet of the doctrine of Political Correctness, feminism is the prevailing dogma on university campuses and in the book industry. The feminists are powerful enough in the media, in schools and colleges, and in politics and government to intimidate most of their opposition, especially men...The feminists' goal is to eradicate from our culture everything that is masculine and remake us into a gender-neutral society.”
10. We ought to stick with the Bible!
11. In chapter 11, Paul deals with headship and he deals with head covering (11:3-16).

12. If we take the Bible literally, the headship of man is clearly taught. Unfortunately, many people (even many who profess to be Christian) do not take the Bible literally.
13. “Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head (Christ, cf. verse 3).”
14. The Jews wear their hats when they pray, but here we see that Christians are not to do that (3:4, 7-9).
15. On the other hand, the woman shows her subordination by having her head covered (11:5). “But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head (her husband)...” (11:5).
16. In most cultures, the shawl is a token of modesty and of subordination.
17. On the basis of this verse, some churches teach that women must wear either a hat or a shawl to church. When I was a boy all churches practiced this. But when I was a boy, women wore hats just about everywhere anyway.
18. Paul says in verse 15 that the woman’s long hair “is given her for a covering.” I think this means a shawl is not necessary. In some cultures it may be considered appropriate and that is understandable.
19. I just a video on the Internet. French politician Marine Le Pen canceled a meeting with Lebanon's Grand Mufti yesterday after refusing to wear a head-covering. To Muslims this would signify her subjection.
20. In Jewish culture and in pagan culture, it was a disgrace for a woman to have her head shaven or shorn, that is cut short (11:5, 6, 13-15). Bible commentators and historians tell us that in Paul’s day, prostitutes in Corinth often shaved their heads.
21. The modern-day “unisex” styles are rebellious and anti-Christian.
22. Warren Wiersbe says, “The woman’s long hair is her glory, and it is given to her ‘instead of a covering.’ In other words, if local custom does not dictate a head-covering, her long hair can be that covering. I do not think that Paul meant for all women in every culture to wear a shawl for a head-covering; but he did expect them to use their long hair as a covering and as a symbol of their submission to God’s order” (*The Bible Exposition Commentary*).
23. Both man and women were made in the image of God, but since the woman was made from the man (from one of Adam’s ribs, Genesis 2:21), she is also “the glory of the man” (11:7).
24. God’s order goes back to creation (11:8, 9). First Timothy 2:13 says, “For Adam was first formed, then Eve.” Priority does not imply inferiority. Men and women are partners (11:11, 12).

25. Originally, the woman came from the man, but ever since then the man has come from the woman. “Even so is the man also by the woman” (11:12). You cannot have one without the other.
26. “For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God” (11:12). All things come from God (11:12).
27. I passed over verse 10. It is probably one of the most unusual verses in the Bible. Paul has been arguing from the facts of creation, and the angels were a big part of God’s creation.
28. Referring to angels, Job 38:7 says, “When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”
29. Ephesians 3:9, 10 says, God “created all things by Jesus Christ,” to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church “unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places” (the angels).
30. Angels are present when Christians worship. “For this cause ought the woman to have power (her hair or headcovering, the symbol of her godly submission) on her head because of the angels” (11:10).
31. Good Christians can disagree on some of these things, but we should not be contentious (11:16).

CONCLUSION:

1. God is a God of order. I read a great message by Dr. Walter Wilson on this recently. It was published February 10, 2017 in the *Sword of the Lord*.
2. It is a long message so I will only say a few words about it. Dr. Wilson begins by saying that you will never find a straight peanut, nor will you ever see a straight grapevine or a straight bean vine. Why?
3. Because that’s the way God ordered it.
4. “You can’t keep a good dandelion down. If the grass is two inches high, the dandelion comes up three; if the grass is five inches high, the dandelion comes up six; if the grass is ten inches high, the dandelion comes up eleven.” God is a God of order.