

LOVE IS

1 & 2 Corinthians

Week 12: 1 Corinthians 11a

Issue #4 - Order in worship - Chapters 11-14

- 1 Corinthians 11 - Headship and Communion
- 1 Corinthians 12 - The Place and Purpose of Spiritual Gifts
- 1 Corinthians 13 - Love as Prime Motivator
- 1 Corinthians 14 - Language and Order

1 Corinthians 11:1-16

- Head covering is/was a traditional practice in central Asia, western Europe, and Africa. It has not been a traditional practice in North/South America or eastern Asia.
 - Head covering as beneficial and practical
 - Head covering as respectful and personal

In the Bible:

- Genesis 24:65 - asked the servant, "Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?" "He is my master," the servant answered. So she took her veil and covered herself.
- Numbers 5:18 - And the priest shall set the woman before the LORD, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering.
- Isaiah 3:17 - The Lord will bring sores on the heads of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will make their foreheads bare.

In Jewish tradition:

The Mishna explains: And who is categorized as a woman who violates the precepts of Moses? This includes cases such as when she feeds him food that has not been tithed, or she does not separate a portion of dough to be given to a priest, or she vows and does not fulfill her vows. And who is considered a woman who violates the precepts of Jewish women? One who, for example,

goes out of her house, and her head, i.e., her hair, is uncovered; or she spins wool in the public marketplace; or she speaks with every man she encounters. Abba Shaul says: Also one who curses her husband's parents in his presence. Rabbi Tarfon says: Also a loud woman. And who is defined as a loud woman? When she speaks inside her house and her neighbors hear her voice.

In the Roman world:

"The Romans usually sacrificed with the head covered...

(*Warrior, Roman Religion*, Cambridge University Press at 21).

"... they thus worshipped the Gods, either humbling themselves by concealing the head, or rather by pulling the toga over their ears as a precaution lest any ill-omened and baleful sound from without should reach them while they were praying. (Plutarch, *Roman Questions*, penelope.uchicago.edu).

In the Corinthian Church:

- We don't have the originating letters and questions, but Paul's response gives us more than enough detail to recreate the scenario.
- Imagine a typical Sunday at Community, but the congregational singing, small group sessions, potluck, and Lord's Supper are happening at different times in different places. It's confusing, disorderly, feelings are hurt, and people begin popping off at each other.
- The Corinthian church also had an 'image' problem - our preachers and teachers need to have good stage appeal to compete in town!
- To establish order - the head of every man is Christ. The head of every woman is her husband. Paul affirmed singleness earlier - where there is no husband, Christ is the head of the woman. Just as Jesus the Son submits to the Father, we each submit to each other in the roles that God created. This brings order. A woman can still pray or preach - the head covering shows that she is not subverting the order of her household.
- Further examples of interpreting scripture:
 - Proverbs 24:27
 - Romans 16:16