



# Covering

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## **What Do The Two Coverings Teach Us?**

This world functions through authority and government. The kingdom of God also functions through authority and government. The authority in the latter is spiritual but is made known through the obedience of the saints. God's ways are seen in His people, in those who follow the Chief Shepherd in simplicity of faith. So, as we view the following Scriptures we should understand them as outward reflections of a heart inwardly submitted to the Christ of God.

Jesus, coming as the second Adam, is God's representative governmental Head over man. Saints ought to be in full agreement with what God has done in Christ. By contrast the natural man will bend the knee only at His second coming (1 Corinthians 15:24-25). The world is full of rebellion and chaos, however, it is the calling of saints to find their delight in the Christ now.

The government of God is made known to us in Scripture. 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, gives us understanding about the way in which Christians are to function in faith. In and through Scripture, the mind of God is shown to Christians. The following truths are shown so that the authority of Christ will be fully acknowledged, and submitted to by His people.

## The First Covering

First Corinthians 1:2 shows us the teachings of the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle Paul. Paul addressed this epistle to those who are said to be saints; “who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” This means the instructions in this epistle are foundational Christian truth to all Christians in all generations. The Apostle Paul instructs that the things he writes are the commandments of the Lord. (1 Corinthians 14:37).

### 1 Corinthians 11:1-16

**Verse 1: “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”** In this verse, Christians are told to be imitators of the truth of Christ, as they see it experienced and lived out in the life of the Apostle Paul. Paul was looking at Christ, to imitate and live out the life of Jesus. This life is the life of the Spirit.

**Verse 2: “Keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.”** Believers are instructed to keep the traditions the Apostle Paul delivered to them. The Greek word for traditions here is *paradosis*. W. E. Vine’s expository gives it’s meaning as ‘a handing down.’ The application of the word tradition in 1 Corinthians 11:2 is not like the traditions of men as found in Mark 7:8. The meaning of traditions here has the force of the **commandments of the Lord** (1 Corinthians 14:37).

**Verse 3: “But I wish you to know that the Christ is the head of every man, but the woman’s head (is) the man and the Christ’s head God”** (JND). The order of authority given here is in governmental headship. This headship sets down a structure of order like this: God, Christ, man, woman. This sets the stage and foundation for the verses to follow.

**Verse 4: “Every man praying or prophesying having his head covered dishonors his head.”** A man is not to pray or prophecy with his head covered, because it would dishonor his head (Christ). The man is the image and glory of God as in verse 7. This was new teaching to the Jewish man who prayed with his head covered. (Vincent Word Studies page 786). The explanation given for a man not to cover his head is because the man is the image and glory of God as shown in verse 7.

**Verse 5: “Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head...”** This instruction is founded on man’s place in creation. Whereas, if a woman prays or prophesies with her head uncovered, she dishonors her head (man). This practice of the head covering puts an outward expression to the order of headship that God has established in verse 3.

The veiling (covering) of women has been practiced for 1900 years in the churches. Only in the last 50 or 60 years, with the growing power of the Laodician spirit (Revelation

3:14-18) in the churches, has there been a turning away from this truth as taught in these Scriptures.

**Verse 6: “For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered.”** Here we are taught if a woman is not covered or veiled that her hair should be cut off. This statement may seem harsh to us but God the Holy Spirit is the author of these words.

**Verse 7: “For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.”** In this verse we are instructed in the order of creation, God made the man in His own image and glory. The woman was taken from the man, so she is the glory of the man. This truth gives us the understanding of verse 3. That is, the woman is in the place of subjection to the man in the order of creation.

**Verse 8: “For man is not from woman, but woman from man.”** This verse enlarges on the point of the woman’s subjection because she has been taken from the man for her place in creation. The order of God’s government for man on the earth is seen in this truth. Christians are the epistles of God which are read of all men, especially in the place of faith to this truth.

**Verse 9: “Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man.”** The woman was created of God for the man. All things God created in nature were of the

male/female species, except for Adam. The woman was then created from Adam, and for Adam, as his helpmate. The woman is not equal to the man in the structure of governmental authority. This governmental authority of God manifests the headship of the man. The woman is created for the man in his God given headship.

## **The Angels**

**Verse 10: “For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.”** The covering or veiling of a woman reveals she is in her place with the authority of God upon her. It also reveals that, the angels are observing the work of God among the saints. In other words the angels are observing the effects of redemption among the saints, through observing this authority on the women’s head. One might ask, is there any other place in Scripture that shows us that heavenly beings are learning by the actions of the saints? In Ephesians 3:10, we learn that the wisdom of God is being made known by the truth manifest in the Church to heavenly beings. It is quite plausible that angels cannot know about these things except through the Church of God, because they cannot experience redemption. Saints walking in faith to the headship of Christ are showing His authority over them. The authority of the woman, as seen in her veil, is

clear evidence of the Federal Headship of the Lord Jesus in and among His people. 1 Peter 1:12 tells us that angels desire to look into things, which have been revealed to and through the Church. The Christian woman has the privilege of revealing those heavenly things through the covering.

This desire of angels to look into things revealed through the Church, shows that the saints are epistles, known and read by all men (2 Corinthians 3:2). And not by men alone but also by angels, as the previous verses show. 1 Corinthians 4:9 teaches that even the apostles have become spectacles to be observed by the angels. We can conclude this by saying even the angels learn more of the wisdom of God through the veiling of women.

**Verse 11: “Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord.”** In the Lord, neither the man, nor the woman is to be autonomous of the other. Both have the same Lord, and both are one in Him. God’s design for marriage is for the woman to compliment the man, and the man to compliment the woman, so also in the Lord.

**Verse 12: “For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God.”** Here it is shown that the woman, coming from the man in creation has her existence from the man. For without the man the woman would not exist. The man however, coming from the woman (in birth) cannot exist

except through the woman. God's design has made both one in the procreation of man on the earth.

## **The Second Covering**

**Verse 13: “Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?”** Instructions are given to us here through a question. This question is asked in reference to the glory which God has given the women (her hair), in her creation as a woman. Is it within God's order for a woman to pray with her head uncovered? This is asked because of two issues: her glory and her place before God in subjection to man.

**Verse 14: “Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him?”** The difference God has made between the man and the woman is seen in the woman's glory, which is natural. Man is made to reflect the Creator's glory, which is divine. He is not to cover the reflection of God's image and glory with long hair. For this dishonors the man and his head, Christ.

**Verse 15: “But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her, for her hair is given to her for a covering.”** Does this verse teach that a woman does not need a veil or covering if she has long hair? Many in churches may think so, however, the answer to this question

is found in nature. This verse is speaking to us of that which is evident in nature. Long hair has been given to a woman for a natural glory and this natural glory is said to be her covering in nature as a woman. This second covering has nothing to do with her being a Christian or not being a Christian, it only has to do with being born as a woman in flesh and bones. In other words, the covering in nature that a woman has been given is clear evidence that she needs to be veiled as a Christian. She has a natural glory in her hair but her glory in nature must be covered when praying or prophesying so only the spiritual glory of Christ might be seen. In verse 13, we read what is evident in view of this truth **“Judge in yourselves: is it comely that the woman pray unto God uncovered?”**

**Verse 16: “But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom nor do the churches of God.”** This verse speaks to us about the contention some may create in view of these truths presented in the verses 1-15. We are told that this truth of the women being covered is not to be open to wrangling or oppositions. All the churches practice the same thing, the veiling of women, and have no such custom as to debate the covering of women.

## **Some Objections**

Here are some objections (O) to these Scriptures and their answers (A).

**O.** The veiling of women was just for the days when the Bible was written, it was part of their culture.

**A.** Spiritual order is given in Scripture as the reason for veiling of women. The address of instructions given in the book of 1 Corinthians is addressed to all saints everywhere that call on the name of the Lord (1 Corinthians 1:2).

Time does not change the order of God as seen in His government. Every Scripture is divinely inspired and profitable for teaching, for correction, for conviction, for instruction in righteousness (1 Timothy 3:16). In Mark 7:9, Jesus spoke these words to the Pharisees, “Well do you set aside the commandment of God, that you may observe (put into practice) what is delivered by yourselves” (JND). As the Word of God was set-aside in that day, so history repeats itself in our day. Many churches in our day have set aside the Word of God concerning veiling, to pursue the culture of the unbelieving world. The results of this pursuing of the world are: dilution of truth, weakened churches, and weakened families.

**O.** My pastor is my covering so I don't need to be covered.

**A.** As already stated, pastoral care has nothing to do with veiling.

**O.** Veiling was done in Greece because only prostitutes were not veiled.

**A.** This again is an attempt to make Scripture a book of culture but it is God's revealed truth (1 Corinthians 14:37; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:12).

**O.** My pastor told me this practice is not necessary for today.

**A.** Jesus stated in John 10:35, that the "Scripture cannot be broken." The Apostle Peter writes concerning the Word of God: "...The Word of God which lives and abides forever" (1 Peter 1:23).

**O.** 1 Corinthians 11:16 states; "if anyone seems contentious we have no such custom, nor the assemblies of God" (JND). This must mean the churches did not practice veiling.

**A.** The Holy Spirit has just devoted 15 verses for instruction on the covering of women. Would it not be confusion to then say we teach it, but we don't practice it? The answer to this question is found in the statement in verse 16, "If anyone seems contentious." The teaching being expressed in the assemblies had no such custom of arguing about such things, but all assemblies kept the practice of veiling.

**O.** Is not veiling just a form of legalism or bondage?

**A.** This question has its foundation based from church practices of our present day culture. A careful study of Scripture will show neither the Apostle Paul, nor the Holy Spirit are introducing legalism into this age of grace but, are revealing God's normal Christian order.

**O.** Since I live alone and do not have a husband, why would I need to wear a veil or covering?

**A.** Whether a Christian woman has a husband or not, is not the issue, of why Scripture teaches a Christian woman to be veiled or covered. It is taught to Christians because of God's order in creation; God, Christ, man, woman. A man for example is not to wear a veil or a hat when praying or prophesying, whether he has a wife or not.

The first Adam, following the woman, destroyed what God had established in creation. The second Adam (Christ) revealed the mind of God for man concerning the right order in creation. This authoritarian order of God in creation is seen in Christians who bow to the Lordship of Jesus in what the Holy Spirit has taught believers to practice. What is taught to us is this; when the woman is praying or prophesying while covered, she has the power or authority of God on her head through the veil (1 Corinthians 11:10), and is identifying her life with the life and Lordship of Jesus in His kingdom. The Christian woman wearing the veil is a testimony to the grace and power of God.

**O.** Does not the Scripture say the women's hair is her covering?

**A.** If the hair was the covering, a man would have to shave his head. For in 1 Corinthians 11:7 we are told a man is not to cover his head.

**O.** God looks upon the heart, not upon what we wear or how or what garment we have on. So why make an issue of women's veiling?

**A.** It is true, God looks on the heart (Luke 16:15), and man looks upon the outward person (1 Samuel 16:7). A woman who practices wearing a covering could have a cold heart and not be receptive to the Spirit of God's grace. However, this line of thinking is used by some for: not giving money for the Lord's purposes, never gathering with the Lord's people, not remembering the Lord in the bread and cup, and not practicing water baptism. These are all outward practices. To say God does not intend for every believer to conform outwardly to the image of His Son through the Word of God, is the way of a rebellious heart.

The heart that is submitted unto Christ will find joy in inward and outward submission to His leading.

## **Is It Our Delight To Do The Will Of The Father?**

In view of the world having a major influence on the churches today, there is much confusion, and anguish where the world and churches collide on the subject of covering. The Psalmist also faced much opposition in his pilgrimage. He penned these words in Psalms 119:143. “Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: Yet your commandments (words) are my delight.” Should not the Christian also delight in His word even unto faith?

D. Neely

## **A Sister’s Experience**

“Years ago I felt convicted about covering my head, but I knew no one who practiced it, except a rather closed Mennonite community in our area. I could find no knowledgeable person in church leadership who could help me know what to do and my husband was uninterested in spiritual things. So I quit trying, and focused on other spiritual issues for many years. One issue with which I had a great deal of trouble was submission, headship and reverence. I wanted so badly to be able to submit to my husband, but time and again I failed. I blamed him for lack of spiritual leadership. Another issue I struggled with was family harmony. My children, raised in the church, behaved as though they hated one another and strife and contention

were with us constantly. I did not at that time see how these two issues were related, nor how they both related to the sign of authority.

Through a series of events, my husband came to faith in Christ. He began reading the Bible and received some remarkable insights from it. He found more and more discrepancies between what the Bible actually said, and what church people actually practiced, such as the passage about outward adornment in 1 Peter 3. Of course, I had no answers when he asked why the discrepancies existed. The day he found 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, he asked me why the churches did not practice head coverings; I knew I was going to have to examine this issue again.

The lady I considered to be my best friend told me that she thought the head covering was bondage. This caused me to hesitate, because I respected the opinion of my friend, and because I did not want to lose this friendship.

I took a retreat in a friend's cabin to try to settle the issue and receive counsel from the Word of God. I argued with God at length about the head covering, I was torn. Part of me wanted to obey God's Word, but part of me just wanted to do whatever was socially acceptable and to have people like me. I told God that no one else did it. He was unimpressed. I told God that even spiritual women who had blessed me greatly did not practice this. He said His call on me was the issue, not His dealing with other people.

I said that it would look out of style; He again, was unimpressed. I brought up the issue of my best friend's objections that did not make any points with Him. Finally, in my foolishness and pride, (God is so patient with me!), I had the audacity to try to show Him from His Word why I did not have to wear the covering. God was silent. It was a silence filled with hurt. I ended my retreat on that note determined to let God direct every area of life except head covering. But God's silence eventually gave way to gracious reminder that everything He asked of me was for my good; nothing He asked of me was to hurt me. I broke. I put a covering on and I determined to wear it.

As the days went by, I began to notice a difference in my thought life. I had been plagued with having evil thoughts. They decreased and then all but disappeared. All I can attribute this to is the activity of holy angels on my behalf as a result of the sign of authority. I noted that my attitude toward my husband changed. In place of contempt, frustration and criticism, was submission. Then reverence and submission, which had been so difficult so as to seem almost impossible, now became almost easy. Reverence, which I had been unable to work up on my own strength, became a source of great joy to me.

After more than twenty years of marriage, I finally saw the possibility of being the kind of wife I had always wanted to be. My desires changed completely. Instead of having

the desire, to make a name for myself and to “be somebody,” I was flooded with contentment to be a helpmeet, a person in the background. I did not feel that I had to give up my dreams. My dreams had changed, and I saw that it was entirely possible, even probable that they would come true. Our family life changed. The love and harmony I had longed to see among my children became more and more evident as the days went on. The children also came under my authority, which had the effect of increasing the fear of God in my heart. I knew that they would obey me, so I was much more careful to hear God’s council before I told them to do something.

One negative note (though really it is not negative) is that my friend became very angry and our friendship was broken. There has been some reconciliation, but we are not as close as we once were. But God has shown me that I was holding that friendship in too high a place in my life, it could have become an idol. Furthermore, the friendship had started to be a detriment to both of us spiritually. I became sensitive to the fact that instead of encouraging one another in godliness, we were encouraging one another to hold on to fleshly habits and sinful attitudes.

### **A sister in Christ**

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