

What is Headship

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I. Introduction. Text: I Corinthians 11:2-16.

II. Headship is a principle to govern God's people for all time.

A. The principle is that a husband is the head of a wife, that Christ is the head of man, and that the Father is the head of Christ.

B. The head refers to the control center of the body.

1. The head refers to the priority of function.

2. Used metaphorically the word head means leadership.

C. Christ has a right to lead the whole human race.

D. The head of Christ is the Father in Christ's assumed humanity.

E. The headship of Christ and the Father helps us to understand the headship of marriage.

1. The wife voluntarily takes a support role when she agrees to marriage.

2. Headship does not involve origin as much as it involves direction.

III. The principle is clarified under the conditions at Corinth.

A. The center of Paul's concern is the public ministry of the Word of God.

B. The veil comes in as the proper acceptance of headship in this public ministry.

1. Both men and women could pray and prophesy.

2. It was important how they did it—the man as a man and the woman as a woman.

C. Where it was not disgraceful, women were to continue wearing the symbol.

IV. The custom was based upon creation.

A. Both man and woman were made in the image and glory of God. (Genesis 5:1)

B. The male is called upon to manifest a different aspect of God's glory.

1. The male is to represent that God made mankind and delights in him publicly.

2. The love of God for man was poured out everywhere in Jesus' ministry.

C. The woman is said to be the glory of man. In man, a woman finds delight.

1. This indicates a private intimate glory.
2. A veil is not a mark of subjection—it is a mark of privacy.
3. The nearest parallel is a wedding ring.
4. The woman gives testimony to an intimacy with God only possible through redemption.
5. Woman is for her husband, which is the key idea behind headship.

V. The woman needed to have authority on her head because of the angels. The angels who were present at creation might be offended.

VI. There is full equality as persons between men and women.

VII. Nature teaches the principle that men with short hair and women with long hair honor God.

- A. This is evident in baldness, which is common among men and not women.
- B. In a culture where the wearing of veils is not a custom, long hair is adequate.

VIII. Conclusion.

- A. Men need to take spiritual responsibility in their homes.
- B. Women are to support their husbands.
- C. If women are to minister the Word publicly, they are to do so with humility.

Application questions:

1. Should wives in the church wear veils today? Explain.

2. What does this passage have to say about headship? Are the roles of wives and husbands equal?

3. What are some situations in which headship in a family might need to be exercised today? Explain.
