

Day 93, 1 Corinthians 11

by David Servant

David Servant explores the cultural and spiritual implications of head coverings and the proper conduct during the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11.

Scripture: Proverbs 3:11, 1 Corinthians 11:27, 1 Corinthians 11:32, Ephesians 5:23, Ephesians 5:33

Topics: "Marriage And Honor", "Lord's Supper"

Description

David Servant discusses the importance of understanding the underlying spiritual principles behind Paul's words on women's head coverings, emphasizing the significance of honoring one's spouse above mere symbols. He highlights the need for wives to always honor their husbands, as instructed in Scripture. Additionally, he delves into the proper observance of the Lord's Supper, emphasizing the importance of waiting for one another, self-examination, and avoiding selfish behaviors that detract from the sacredness of the meal.

Transcript

Unlike most other days, today I'm glad I'm limited to 700 words, which will be my excuse for not engaging in a lengthy commentary on women's head coverings! Paul's words are not as clear as I wish they were on this subject. So I will limit myself to a few observations.

First, there are no unique Greek words for husband and wife, and so clearly the words translated man and woman in parts of this passage would be better translated husband and wife. Otherwise we might conclude that every man is the head of every woman. The truth is, only husbands are heads of their wives (Eph. 5:23).

Second, it seems to me that the underlying spiritual principles of which Paul wrote are more important than the "symbols" of those principles. A wife can wear a head covering, "a symbol" of her husband's authority over her (11:10), yet continually "disgrace her head" (11:5), her husband, in many other ways. So the important thing is that she always honors her husband, and this is contained in Scripture (Eph. 5:33).

Third, I chuckle when someone says that Paul's words about head coverings have nothing to do with cultural practices in the ancient world, and thus they should be implicitly obeyed by all generations of Christians in all cultures. Paul wrote, for example, that the woman who prays with her head uncovered is "one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved" (11:5). How many women in your culture shave their heads? In how many cultures of the world, old and more recent, would Paul's example have any

relevance?

If head coverings were a God-ordained "symbol" (11:10), one required by God to be worn by all wives during prayer, you would think that would have been mentioned a few other places in Scripture.

Finally, if you are a woman who is persuaded that God wants you to cover your head when you pray, then do it. But don't throw a little napkin on top of your head or wear a fancy little hat to church! Cover your entire head! And remember that wearing a head covering does not exempt one from the obligation to obey the second greatest commandment.

Selfishness was surfacing in Corinth even when the believers partook of the Lord's Supper. Keep in mind that the Lord's Supper was intended to be a supper and not a snack, which is why it is called the Lord's Supper. It was a full meal in Corinth, and that is very obvious from what Paul wrote. Moreover, the Corinthians didn't meet in specially-built church buildings, and so most likely, they ate the Lord's Supper where they ate most of their meals, in their homes. Members came together and shared food.

Some, however, who arrived first, arrived hungry. Not waiting for the others, they started eating and drinking, with the result that some who arrived late and who were too poor to bring food to share found everything consumed! Worse, they found some who were drunk from the wine! This is not what Jesus envisioned for the sacred meal that He gave to His followers!

Paul admonished the Corinthian believers not only to wait for one another, but also to examine themselves before they partook of the bread and cup, lest they partake in an "unworthy manner" (11:27). Otherwise they endangered themselves of being disciplined by the Lord in the form of sickness and even premature death. Such discipline from God ensures that we "will not be condemned along with the world" (11:32). That is, if God didn't discipline wayward children, the result is that they would be cast into hell with the unsaved. This is not proof of the doctrine of "once-saved-always-saved," however, as Scripture teaches that we can reject God's discipline (Prov. 3:11). Rather, it is one more proof that holiness is required for heaven and not just "faith."

Is it wrong for Christians to drink wine? Since Paul didn't condemn the Corinthians for drinking wine (with alcoholic content) during the Lord's Supper, then the answer must be "no." Drunkenness, however, is a sin that will exclude one from God's kingdom (6:9-10). Avoiding all alcohol is always a sure way to stay sober.

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