

Covering Customs

1 Corinthians 11:2-16

Outline of 1 Corinthians:

- I. **Introduction (1:1-9)**
- II. **Problems Reported (1:10-6:20)**
- III. **Questions Raised (7:1-16:4)**
 - d. Issues for Worship (11:2-34)

A. Requiring head-coverings for women during church worship was a cultural custom, not a binding doctrine.

Key words: “traditions” (v1) – *paradosis* – that which is handed down

“custom” (v16) – *sunētheia* – a habit; a custom

B. Principles to consider when studying this passage:

1. **Concerning Bible Interpretation:** The New Testament was written in the pre-canon era of the church age; we live in the post-canon era of the church age.
2. **Considering Male Headship:** The New Testament requires the structure of male headship and female submission in the realms of marriage/family and in the church, but in no other realm.
3. **Considering Cultural Context:** Our practices must take into consideration the culture in which we live so that we can worship God with honor.
4. **Considering Our Attitude:** Believers must embrace the life God has given us in order to bring glory to God; this includes men and women embracing their God-given roles.

C. Verse-by-Verse Study of 1 Corinthians 11:2-6

- **v2 – Introductory Praise for Keeping Tradition**
 - **v3** – Summary of Male Headship Principle

 - **v4-5a** – Outworking of Male Headship Principle in Public Worship Practices
 - Men should not have their heads covered while praying or prophesying.
 - Women should have their heads covered while praying or prophesying.

 - **v5b-10** – Reasons for the Head-covering Practice
 - **v5b-6** reinforces that a woman praying with her hair uncovered is perceived as a scandalous or unsubmitive woman.

 - **v7** distinguishes a man as the glory of God from the wife as the glory of husband.

 - **v8-9** appeals to the creation order to support male headship.

 - **v10** concludes that a woman's head ought to be covered during church gatherings to demonstrate submission.

 - **v11-12** – Balance for Men and Women to Prevent Headship Abuse

- **v13 – Personal Challenge to form a Conviction about Head-coverings**
 - **v14-15** – Further Considerations on the Distinction Between Men and Women

- **v16 – Closing Warning about Violating Custom**