

“Propriety in Worship”

1 Corinthians 11:1-16

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4-10; 11-23

Introduction: The question that comes up in this chapter is whether the last few verses of chapter 10 go with chapter 10 or with the beginning of chapter 11. My thoughts are that there is no break at all, and that Paul is just continuing his same thoughts. Paul goes from protecting your witness in public to protecting your witness in worship.

1 Cor 10:31-11:2

31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 32 Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— 33 even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

*11 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.
2 I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings, just as I passed them on to you.
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Nothing makes a pastor prouder than to see his sheep practicing what he has taught them. That will also mean that the pastor must be a good example. If the pastor is not following Christ, don't follow him. He must also get his teachings from the Word.

Propriety means- *What is proper, fitting, conformity to what is proper and fitting with accepted standards of behavior.* **Polite** comes from **Propriety**. We are to be proper people.

Context: Paul is still in the process of bringing order to this congregation that is out of order and in confusion.

The immediate context is their worship service. At the end of this chapter, he deals with disorder and the Lord's Supper.

In order to understand 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, you must understand Eastern culture and the local situation in Corinth. There is universal application to the passage as well, but we must take **our** culture into account as well (Distanciation).

Main Point: It matters how we approach God in worship. It matters how we prepare for worship. It also matters how we act in the service. If you are a disruption in the service, you are not being appropriate.

Let me make a few observations:

- Constantly getting up and down distracts the pastor and the congregation. I am being totally honest with you when I say that I try to be led by the Spirit and listen to the Spirit as I preach. Most times I never see what people are doing or saying but others do. If you need to go, then go. Emergencies are expected. But if you are a in a habit of being a distraction you need to do better planning about where you sit.
- Parents can make kids behave or take them out. I have been to the oak tree out back on many occasions and have scares on my thigh from getting pinched in service.
- When the service starts, end your conversation.
- Prayer at the altar is always welcome before the service.
- The invitation and offertory are not the end of the service. These are the zenith of the service. These are a time of reflection and prayer. Our offertories are as good as any

that exist anywhere. The offering is not a bathroom break unless you must go.

- Have your bible or iPad and be ready to listen. Take notes or give your pastor a good positive feedback occasionally.
- Just use common sense and be respectful of others near you. We are in the presence of a king.
- Please pray for me as I preach.

* It makes a difference in our hearts if we are ready to connect with God.

I know this to be true from scripture and personal experience.

Why were Sunday nights so sweet? Because it was our mature believers who came who were looking for true worship. You were ready when you got here.

It is frustrating when I get here fired up and ready to go and I look out at folk who look like they are in the dentist's waiting room.

If you were going to meet our former President George Bush tonight, how would you come to church? Dress any differently? Any attitude changes? Any excitement?

Well, let me tell you, there is a Prophet, Priest, and King in our service today. King Jesus is here every service.

Paul wants order, proper submission, and proper respect for God in the service. He is worthy of it, correct?

* Don't hear me say order and think boring, dull, or stuck in the traditions of men.

*I mean exciting, biblical, prepared, orderly, and honoring worship that gets the attention of Heaven.

I. Submission in Worship v. 3-10

The word “**head**” occurs 10 to 12 times depending on your translation in vv. 3-10.

The main thought here is authority. Paul gets a hard time for picking on women, but it is not right. Look at this in totality:

Authority:

1. The Head of Man is Christ.

Ephesians 5:23 says:

²² Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing^[a] her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but he feeds and care for it, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”^[b] ³² This is a profound mystery— but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

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Paul says submission works in God's house and it works in the home.

Paul relates authority and submission to all areas of life.

Eph 5:21

21 Submit to **one another** out of reverence for Christ.

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Vines says, “*A man is not a man until he is conquered or mastered by Jesus Christ.*”

2. The Head of the Woman is Man.

The men are to be spiritual leaders at church and in the home. The men take the lead and teach, discipline, and care for the flock and the family. Wouldn't it be great to see a church where men lead, and women didn't have to do everything. *To lead is not to dictate but to be responsible for service.*

This is about authority and submission not **inferiority** and **superiority**.

Adrian Rogers:

“No head is dead, two heads, is a freak.”

Galatians 3:28 “You are neither Jew, Greek, slave or free or male and female - all are one in Christ.”

Concerning worth, ability, intelligence, access to God – All are one.

However, in position – There has to be a central Authority and Submission. (There has to be Spiritual Authority in the church).

When Spiritual authority is ignored – The church or congregation begins to travel a road of confusion,

unbiblical doctrine, and the door of every kind of belief and acceptance enters.

Application: *I will bet no preacher you have ever had was willing to say this to you!*

When a husband is not the spiritual leader and the wife has to take over that job, the wife will no longer be able to submit to her husband.

Likewise, when the husband is the spiritual leader and the wife does not submit or respect her husband, he will stop loving her.

1 Timothy 2:12 – “I suffer not a woman to teach, not to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.”

Paul is not saying women cannot participate in worship. He is not saying women cannot hold positions of authority. He is not saying women cannot speak in church or give testimony to God’s goodness. This is a matter of teaching and leading.

In Corinth, the women had said, “we are free in Jesus so we can do as we please.” Paul says no, you are under divinely appointed headship, and you must submit to authority to be in God's will and the church be in order.

No more can the women remove their authority and submission from the man than can a man remove his authority and submission from under Christ. Christ would also not be anything other than submissive in His incarnation under The Father. Was Christ a lesser God-Man under submission? No!

Illustration: Monty Roberts. A broken horse loses no power. He only becomes more useful.

Common Sense: I ask a man to be the spiritual leader in his home. Then he comes to church where he is responsible to help the Shepherd lead the church and he is being taught by a woman. That is not God's intention. This is a matter of leadership not superiority. Someone has to lead. God has called the men to lead.

However, no one is asked to submit to abuse or violence. That's not what Paul is addressing. Never go out of this church and say pastor Jerry says a woman has to submit to abuse or ill treatment. Our context is propriety in worship and discipleship in the body.

*The man is the head but the wife is the neck. Get it?

3. The Head of Christ is God - v.3

If submission were not godly, would Christ have submitted to God? Jesus does not ask us to do anything He has not done. If Jesus says, "do it, it's good for you." Do it.

Even with a divinely appointed mandate from God – Some men will never surrender to Jesus. Some women will never surrender to the husbands. Some church members will never submit to their pastor. Some pastor will never surrender to Christ or the authorities that God put them under. But Jesus always surrendered to His Father.

John 10:30

"I and my Father are one."

Jesus is co-equal and co-eternal with God. Yet He also said, "My Father is **greater than I**" (John 14:28).

John 8:29

"I always do those things that please Him."

Propriety:

Headship, authority, and submission involve appropriateness, or what is fitting in worship. Church and worship are not secular entities. This is God's house. Our propriety is to look differently than what the world would do.

* Two activities took place in Corinth that were out of their culture and out of God's authority (Praying and Prophesying). Paul had to correct this.

Vines:

- Praying – talking to God for men.
- Prophecy – talking to men for God.
- These two are a part of the service.

Here is the Rub:

In that day, the temple hookers shaved their heads and uncovered their heads. They dressed this way to show their craft.

If you visited 1st Baptist Corinth, you would have seen the women and men acting and dressing like the pagan culture.

In that day, the canon was not closed, and God spoke to men through prophecy and prayer. Paul explains this further in chapter 13. This is an extremely important reference.

1 Cor 13:8-12

8 Love never fails. **But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.** 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when **perfection comes (The scripture)**, the imperfect disappears. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. 12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see

face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

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Today we have it all revealed and written down in scripture. God speaks through the called man of God and His word. The man of God does not need a *Word of Prophecy*.

I am not a fortune teller or psychic. I am not a foreteller either. I am not a seer. I do not predict the future. I do not get visions in the night and rely on dreams. I am a man that has been called to forthtell the Word of God that is inspired and authoritatively written down in the canon of scripture for our good and His glory. Many try to appear super-spiritual to me by telling me of their dreams and visions. What I see in these people are folk that don't know squat about the Word of God. Paul even said he was called to be a servant of this gospel. We have enough prophets; we need some servants. And while I am here, let me say that man's visions and dreams pale in the light of the written Word of God. Nice try.

Paul saw men wearing hats. They covered their heads like the women were to do. They left their place of authority. Just like Adam did. His wife took his place of authority.

Women came to church not wearing veils and they had short hair like the prostitutes.

Some may ask, "Should our women today wear veils?" No, this was a matter of culture. Yet, it does not excuse the matter of submission, authority, and proper dress.

The church should display men in submission to Christ by leading out. The church should display women in submission to their husbands.

* We never want our service to look like what's going on in the temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. This is the point.

This means our dress, our actions, our attitudes, the order of service, the music, and all we do, must be sacred in nature.

* You are to come to God's house with propriety. To prove that we have a problem of submission, all you need do is mention that women are to be submissive to their husbands and the entire message of this chapter gets lost.

Propriety in dress is the number one excuse for lost people to not come to church. Have you ever noticed that? Why is that? Because they do not believe in authority and submission. It's not about clothes. I have never thought it was about what you wear, as long as you are modest; the heart of the matter is submission and authority.

Illustration: The Yellow Dress of Easter.

I'm still old fashion – I like long hair on girls and short hair on boys. A woman's hair is her glory. She can use it to cover herself. That's my preference – if you have short hair or long hair, that's your business. Many ladies have very cute short hair cuts. What I mean is when a woman cuts her hair so as to look like a man. It's none of my business. You have liberty in Christ. I like to know who's who when I see them. I want to make sure I look like a man. I don't have earrings or or wear my pants around my knees. I don't have a man purse either. I do not wear women's undergarments.

* My desire is to say with my appearance – “I'm totally submitted to Jesus.” That's not wrong. If you disagree that's okay; you have freedom in Christ.

II. Propriety Illustrated vv. 8-12. Paul proves his point!

Creation – Paul illustrates his case through creation.

The man formed from the dust of the ground and woman formed from man (Genesis 7).

It is not good for man to be alone. We are partners.

Submission:

Simply put – the veils were signs of a woman's submission to her husband and to God. That's why a bride wears a veil.

The veil was a statement of submission. In **Isaiah 6:1-3** the angels modestly cover themselves when they come into the presence of God.

Isa 6:1-2

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying.

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Cooperation:

There are some things men can do and some things women can do that make us unique. However, we partner together.

Rebellion stops cooperation. When we get a chip on our shoulder, the beauty of submission breaks down.

Church, marriage, and business, and life, all fall apart without submission.

* We have allowed the world to **androgenize** our sexes. I, for one, still respect, and enjoy the differences between men and women. I do not try to get in touch with my feminine side because I do not have one.

Cooperation is necessary due to our differences.

Nature: vv. 13-16

Let's apply. Would it be appropriate for a man to pray and preach in shorts and his shirt unbuttoned in this pulpit?

Would it be okay for a woman to pray and share from this pulpit in a short skirt with cleavage showing? I actually preached in a coat and tie for 35 years. I am comfortable now in slacks and a nice polo. I actually asked my senior adults would it offend them if I did not wear a coat and tie. They said no. That's submission.

God has put in us, ***“the very nature of things,”*** to tell us what is appropriate.

Deuteronomy 22:5 says flat out – *“A woman shall not wear a man's garment, nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord.”* I just destroyed the entire Trans and Homosexual movement with one bible verse. If you are not allowed to change garments, what makes a person think changings sexes is right.

Illustration:

We need to have patience with the young Christian. It takes time for them to learn the customs, i.e., girls who dress too provocatively and men who have long hair.

* A man with long hair got saved and the people gave him a hard time. He left the church but later came back. The drug dealers saw his appearance and tried to sell him drugs. He cut his hair and changed his appearance so as to aid his walk with Christ. God will handle it, just be patience.

Closing: A Final Word

Don't be contentious. If you want to be mad, go ahead be mad—this is the practice of the church of God, and judgment and loss of blessings come from rebellion.

I want to submit! I want to appear like I'm humble and following Jesus on the outside and inside.

Freedom, blessings, and glory come by way of submission.

Illustration: Many times, we will have altar call over some important issue. I will call my deacons forward to pray. I also invite our women to join us, why? Because our women at WBC are so godly and submissive that they will not come forward with the deacons until I invite them. They choose submission first. I love them for that.

Matt 23:5-7

5 "Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; 6 they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; 7 they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them 'Rabbi.'

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Luke 14:7-11

7 When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: 8 "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. 9 If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this man your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. 10 But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. 11 For everyone who exalts

himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

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Illustration: A missionary that came from the mission field that was shocked at the lack of reverence and submission in the American church when she came into our sanctuaries for the first time. Our dress, lackadaisical attitudes, and chit chat before the services without prayer and focused worship shocked her.