

## Parson to Person

### **1 Corinthians 11 – Part 3 (Submission in the Created Order)**

~Repeated from last week~

*“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.*

*Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you. But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. 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. 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. For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God. Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering. But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no*

*such custom, nor do the churches of God” (1 Corinthians 11:1–16 NKJV).*

## **Authority and Subordination in the Corinthian Church**

Last week we began with an introduction to Paul’s instruction regarding Biblical authority and submission. It is apparent that there were Church related gathering issues desperate for address.

### **Biblical Order**

We reviewed the cause and effect of a “women’s liberation movement” that had deeply influenced the Church in Corinth. Definitions regarding feminism, male chauvinism, egalitarianism, and complementarianism were needed for the discussion. In particular, we mentioned that men and women were created to interrelate by male-led complementarianism: *“And the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him’”* (Genesis 2:18). Paul’s declaration, *“I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God”* (vs. 3), set the stage for the economic model—including headship and subordination. Moreover, the statement is both governmental and insightful. It shows that there is an established order, but also that subordination does not indicate inferiority—for *“the head of Christ is God”* (vs. 3c).

### **Jesus—Subject to the Father**

Jesus is God incarnate and, therefore, suffers no inferiority to the Father and is in no way greater or less than the Holy Spirit. However, in the economics (system of organization, operation, or

distribution) of the Godhead, Jesus is the eternal God subject to the Father, and the Holy Spirit is the eternal God subject to the Father and Son.

As purposed within the triune nature of the Godhead, Jesus willingly subjected Himself to the Father for the divine purposes—foreordained before the foundations of the world.

### **Man—Subordinate to God**

*“The head of every man is Christ”* (vs. 3b) places all men and women in subjection to Jesus. We are unequal to Jesus and therefore recognize the necessary subordination. However, problems arise when we struggle with the elevation of man as head over woman, or when women attempt to take the lead and struggle to be head over man.

When men are chauvinistic (an unbiblical attribute) and when women are feminist (likewise unbiblical), both suffer. Moreover, the compromising position of egalitarianism has not helped mankind find the biblical position of complementarianism.

### **Woman—Subordinate to Man**

*“The head of woman is man”* (vs. 3a). Herein was the problem in Corinth, and herein is the problem we still face today. Man is head and woman is subordinate. Do we need to read the verse again? Paul wrote, *“I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God”* (vs. 3). This is the Biblical position. However, this fact should not create an evil and chauvinistic disposition in men nor should it create an evil feminist disposition in women.

## **Different, Not Less!**

All people are morally and spiritually identical, of equal worth and value. However, men and women are not equal any more than all men are equal to all men. Some might suggest otherwise—but they would be wrong.

Without adding confusion, let's just look at the fact that God has unequally offered different positions and opportunities to men and women. God has mandated distinctions between the two genders (see 1 Timothy 3:1–13). Men can't be women and women can't be men. Let's get this right!

## **The Curse**

The male/female chain of authority is part of the curse. Therefore, as expected, we don't like it. Many men resist and/or fail in leadership. Many women resist the male leadership model and its subsequent subordination. We all hate the curse and all it brings—that's the point! Jesus wants us to hate the curse—thereby seeking Him for deliverance.

Therefore, as long as the curse remains, so will human governance, leadership, and submission. The model and practice is necessary and beneficial.

## **No Role Reversals**

The roles of men and women are defined throughout the Scriptures—as is the role of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The distinctions men and women must all recognize is twofold:

- 1) We all will always be subject to the Lord. This is and should be considered a great blessing!
- 2) When the curse has been removed, (it would appear that) the subservient role of women (a characteristic of the curse), and the leadership responsibilities of man over woman (likewise a result of the curse) will be no more. This is unclear in the Scriptures—but seems fitting.

### **The Eternal Nature of God in the Divine Economy**

The economic methodology of the Godhead does not suggest any differing purpose or plan in the Godhead. It does not suggest any disunity of any kind. It is simply the system by which God has organized His methods and purposes.

All three persons of the Trinity are One. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are of the same personality, nature, purpose, and essence. However, each member of the Godhead functions in differing but unified roles and activities. Our salvation is based on the Father's power and love, the Son's death and resurrection (see 1 John 2:2 and Ephesians 2:6), and the Holy Spirit's work of regeneration and sealing of the believer (see Ephesians 4:30 and Titus 3:5).

In a similar way we can understand the harmonious unity and functionality of mankind—without violating the economics of spiritual leadership and submission.

### **The Temporal Nature of the Divine Economy**

It is possible (but unclear within the Scriptures) that there will no longer be a male-led leadership model once the curse has been removed. However, in the present age we must keep the model intact.

All men and women are subject to Christ. If all men and women would submit themselves to Jesus, things would work out beautifully. However, mankind is prone to rebellion, and therefore, troubles arise.

The troubles in the Corinthian Church are not isolated to the past. We suffer the same today.

May the Lord allow us to grow as we learn, submit, and obey. The practical teachings of Scripture are true, right, and beneficial.

Next week we will develop thoughts on the traditions Paul explained: head coverings, and the distinct roles of men and women in ministry. We will also consider the desegregation of men and women in “the faith” —and in the general assembly of believers in the Church Age.

I love you all,  
Pastor Paul