I. Introduction
   A. Living together in worship
      1. Unity, purity, liberty, and now worship
      2. A small handful of issues that existed in Corinth when the corporate church gathered
   *Like always, Paul works through the question or issue but delves deeper to solidify greater truths of the Gospel.
   B. Letter to Paul regarding what to wear when we’re together
      1. When we gather together, who gets to share and isn’t there protocol for how you look when you share and minister?
      2. Difficult passage because we are separated by 20 centuries, and prophecy and head coverings in our culture are not the norm
   *Tough passage, even uncomfortable and subject to confusion and strong emotion, but God calls us to humbly surrender to every corner of his word so that every corner of our lives will be transformed by the light and love of Jesus Christ.
II. 1 Corinthians 11:2-16
   A. New Testament context
      1. One of six New Testament passages dealing with responsibilities of men and women in the church and in the family
      2. In our society, these strike us as confronting, controversial, and counter-cultural.
   *But, God found it significant to communicate these things to us as part of his inspired, written Word.
   B. 1 Corinthians 11:3 = the key
      1. Head = over time, two major camps of understanding have emerged
         a. Head as source
            1. Where we come from, not distinctiveness and not who we are or what we do
            2. Idea of roles is not relevant for today, only an idea of origin
         b. Head as authority
            1. In ancient Greek literature, when used as a metaphor for human relationships it is associated with authority.
            2. Paul’s usage elsewhere in relation to Christ has the sense of authority over someone. (Ephesians 5:23, 1:22, 4:15; Colossians 1:18, 2:10, 2:19)
      2. Flow of verse three
         a. Head of man is Christ - clearly Christ is not just source but authority over humankind
         b. Head of Christ is God - Christ’s relationship with the Father is characterized by submission
            1) The Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) are one and equal yet exist in ordered relationships
2) God and Jesus are fully God but sameness in nature does not prevent differentiation in order and relationships
3) This means that in Jesus' love for us and His love and obedience to the Father, Jesus submits Himself to the authority of the Father and seeks to bring Him glory in which He also shares.

c. Head of woman is man - to be consistent in context, it would be forced for "head" to have a different sense sandwiched between the idea of authority
1) This does not devalue women any more than it devalues Christ.
2) This is an acknowledgement of divinely ordained roles among people who are equal in value, worth, and purpose.

*Equality does not mean that everyone is exactly the same - that they can do or are able to do the same thing–that ignores reality. Differentiation and authority can exist in relationships without having inferiority and superiority of dignity or value or purpose.

4. Implication for humanity with head as authority
   a. Does not say ...
      1) ... that women are subjugated to men.
      2) ... that women are second class with less dignity, intelligence, worth, and purpose than men.
   b. It does acknowledge that there are divinely designed differences between men and women, that gender does matter. There is an order in the relationship between men and women that is somehow reflective of the relationship between the Father and the Son as related to the church and family.

*Verse three doesn't give any details of what this means for society. It is a statement of God-designed principle for the family and His church.

-Does this mean men open doors for women? That men should pay for dates? Only men can be CEOs of companies? Scripture doesn't answer these questions and they aren't the focus of Paul here. In fact, Scripture is expressly concerned with the function of the family and the church.

   c. Both men and women are called to exercise God-honoring authority in the workplace, the military, politics, and other walks of life. We are all gifted and responsible to exercise public ministry within the church while consistent with the distinctives God have ordained.

C. The text
   1. Traditions and God's design (verses 2-3)
   2. Praying and Prophecying (verses 4-5)
      a. Difference from Old Testament (Word of the Lord; inaccuracy = death)
      b. Holy Spirit-led encouragement or warning that pointed to the truth of the Gospel
      c. Public and verbal
      d. Both men and women could prophecy in the gathered church setting (teaching is distinct from this context).
   3. Fashion and gender (verses 4-16)
      a. Paul's call is for men and women to dress and behave like men and women in a way that is consistent with their roles and responsibilities. There are different applications that Scripture teaches focusing on the family and the church.
b. Head covering/veil - cultural marker
   1) Same today as a woman wearing a dress and a man wearing a dress, unless it’s a kilt and you’re Scottish.
   2) The idea here is that we, as men and women, within our cultures, reflect and honor God’s design in male/female interaction.

c. Glory - something in which one takes delight
   1) Man was created to reflect God’s nature and in that God takes great delight? The glory (delight) of God
   2) Women are distinct from men, created by God from man’s rib that God created.
   3) A woman is man’s glory - when they are brought together, she is man’s greatest delight, second only to God. Woman is man’s glory or delight!

d. Verse 13: Judge for yourselves - what in culture recognizes nature’s distinction between men and women? Reflect that and honor God in your context.

e. Verse 16: Don’t let your sinful nature drive your thinking, practice, or pursuits.

4. Mutually dependent (verses 11-12)
   a. God designed humanity in a way that men and women must recognize their dependence on each other in order to carry out God’s directive to be fruitful and multiply and fill the Earth and subdue it and have dominion.
   b. While there is a God-honoring order, humankind (men and women) have authority and responsibility to work together surrendered to God and His divine plan for redemption.

III. What now?
   A. The Body of Christ requires every single person’s participation.
      1. There has never been a question of whether or not women can, in the corporate setting, bring words of encouragement to the body that points others to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
      2. The key here is how men and women relate to one another as they minister.
      3. The way forward is that both men and women should recognize appropriate cultural means of expressing their God-given gender and humbly surrender to God’s divine order in the family and the church.

   B. Questions
      1. Do I recognize and accept that God is good and that He alone determines the purpose and role of men and women?
      2. Am I committed to growing in humility and surrender to Jesus Christ?
      3. I will, in spite of my sin nature and my insecurities, surrender myself to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.
GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER (USE JUST ONE OR ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS TO CONNECT AS YOU START YOUR CONVERSATION)

1. Besides physical differences, what are some other differences between men and women? What are the dangers of stereotypes?

2. Which of these are simply a product of culture and which are biblical? How can you tell the difference?

Pride was a pervasive problem in the church of Corinth. Some of the Corinthians boasted of the eloquence or wisdom of their favorite leaders. Some were arrogant about their liberation from old-fashioned morality. Others were proud of their ability to remain celibate. Still others were puffed up about their knowledge and freedom to eat anything and attend any pagan function without defilement or temptation. In the midst of all this, they could even write proudly to Paul that they were “remembering [him] in everything and... holding to the traditions just as [he] passed them on to [them]” (11:2)! Paul never lost a chance to praise his readers for anything he honestly could, especially when he had to go on with more criticism. From 11:2 through 14:40, the issues all revolve around disorder in public worship, and the root of the disorders is consistently pride. As we dive into this section of 1 Corinthians, ask yourself where you allow pride to influence your worship of Jesus and your attitude towards others in the church.

QUICK REVIEW (OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE TO SHARE WHAT MOST STOOD OUT FROM SUNDAY’S MESSAGE)

Looking back at your notes from this week’s teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, encouraged, challenged, or confused you?

DIG DEEPER (OBSERVATIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURE OR COMPLEMENTARY SCRIPTURES FROM SUNDAY’S MESSAGE)

1. Someone read 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

2. Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. 3. But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. 4. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, 5 but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. 6 For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. 7 For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. 8 For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. 9 Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. 10 That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. 11 Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman: 12 for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. 13 Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? 14 Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, 15 but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. 16 If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.

With all the talk of head coverings, hair length and roles of men and women, it can definitely be a challenge to navigate this passage and figure out how this applies to our lives now. Although this passage is uncomfortable and subject to confusion and strong emotion, God calls us to humbly
surrender to every corner of His Word. We are called to this so that every corner of our lives will be transformed by the light and love of Jesus Christ. If it is helpful, please refer to the commentary at the end of this guide to help with anything confusing. The main ideas that should be focused on are: 1) God loves all His children and their unique contribution to the Body of Christ. 2) God’s desire is for everyone to pray and speak spiritual truths into each other’s lives. 3) Men and women are equal in value, but there are distinctions. 4) We ought to live with humility toward each other and reverence towards God’s design.

**What seems to be Paul’s major concern for the church in this section?**

Paul lays out the order that God has designed in verse 3. How does the relationship between the Father and the Son within the Trinity help us understand that men and women may have different roles but have equal value, worth, and purpose?

**How can one understand the language of verse 7 in a way that does not marginalize a woman’s position in relationship to God?**

Both male and female are created in the image of God (see Genesis 1:26-27). However, man was created to be the glory of God, while woman was made to be the glory of man. “Glory” means something in which one takes delight. Man was created to reflect God’s nature and, in that, God takes great delight. Women are distinct from men, created by God from man’s rib that God created. A woman is man’s glory because when they are brought together, she is man’s greatest delight, second only to God.

**How do Paul’s words in verses 11-12 work in connection to the divine order God has placed on men and women in verse 3?**

God designed humanity in a way that men and women must recognize their dependence on each other in order to carry out God’s directive to be fruitful and multiply and fill the Earth and subdue it and have dominion. While there is a God-honoring order, humankind (men and women) have authority and responsibility to work together surrendered to God and His divine plan for redemption.

**LIVE IT OUT (DISCUSS HOW YOU CAN LIVE OUT THE TRUTHS YOU JUST OBSERVED IN SCRIPTURE)**

1. Considering our current culture, how should we conduct ourselves as men and women that might set us apart from the world?

2. How could you, as either a man or woman, do a better job of respecting and showing humility toward those of the opposite sex? Although it could be seen as offensive in our culture today, in what ways is it important that we live in reverence towards God’s design of how relationships work in our marriages and in our church?

3. What actions, thoughts or words of mine prove that I recognize and accept that God is good and that He alone determines the purpose and role of men and women? Do any of my actions, thoughts or words prove I believe different? What needs to change and how can this group help with that?
CLOSING PRAYER

Ask God to help us be examples of Christ. Pray that God will help us to live with humility towards each other, and that He would keep us from harmful stereotypes. Finally, thank the Father for our salvation through Christ, and that everyone, whether male or female, is a co-equal heir to the promises of God in Jesus.

NEXT WEEK’S MESSAGE SCRIPTURE

LIVING TOGETHER IN WORSHIP: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:17-34

Prepare for next week’s message and group discussion by reading through this passage a few times this week and write down any insights or questions you have before meeting with your home group.

PRAISE/PRAYER REQUESTS (TRY TO HAVE ONE OR A FEW PEOPLE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME)

Use this space or the back of this paper to record down the requests and find a way to share those with the group so you can be praying for each other during the week.

How to Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create a healthy environment for Gospel community, growing in friendship, and living like Jesus together. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, please review the guide before your group meets to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don’t feel pressure to read all the content during your group discussion or to hit on all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help your grow in Gospel community.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead. We are praying for you too!

Visit cpmodesto.org/groupleaders to download the sermon discussion guide every week. Not in a Home Group, but want to be in one? Visit cpmodesto.org/homegroups and use the Home Group Finder!
11:3 “But” shows that Paul has quickly moved from commendation (in v. 2) to correction. Many scholars have looked at this passage and had different takes – is Paul addressing men and women or husbands and wives? Since a woman’s head covering in first-century Roman society was a sign of marriage, it could be seen that Paul is the relationship between husband and wife. The problem for the translators is that New Testament Greek uses the same word for “man” and “husband” and the same word for “woman” and “wife”. And the problem for us is that it makes a big difference to the meaning of the passage. How do we know if it’s talking about married couples or men and women generally? Firstly, it would be strange for Paul to suddenly (and without explanation) use the word to mean “man” in the first phrase of verse 3, then switch the meaning to “husband” in the second phrase, and then switch back to “man” generally in verse 4. The same goes for “woman” in verses 3 and 5. In the absence of any indications to the contrary within the text, it makes sense to translate the same word the same way throughout this tightly knit verse, especially since the repetition of words and ideas seems key to its meaning.

Secondly, what Paul goes on to say in verses 7-9 about human beginnings, and verses 11-12 about future generations, only make sense if they apply to man and woman in general. Even though the application might apply differently to married and unmarried women (see below), we still need to see that Paul’s reasons for those instructions come from a general understanding of the sexes.

Head It is sometimes said that this term “head” means “source,” but in over 50 examples of the expression “person A is the head of person(s) B” found in ancient Greek literature, person A has authority over person(s) B in every case. Therefore, it is best to understand “head” here as referring metaphorically to “authority” (see also Eph. 1:22; 5:23; Col. 2:10). As with the authority of Christ over the church, this is not the self-centered exercise of power but leadership that takes care to serve the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of the wife. See Mark 10:44–45; Eph. 5:23, 25–30. The head of Christ is God indicates that within the Trinity the Father has a role of authority or leadership with respect to the Son, though they are equal in deity and attributes (see notes on John 5:19; 14:28; 1 Cor. 15:28). Paul applies this truth about the Trinity to the relationship of husband and wife. In marriage, as in the Trinity, there is equality in being and value but difference in roles (see Eph. 5:22–33).

11:4 The Greek phrase for “head covered” here literally means “down from the head” and may refer either to long hair that hangs loose (vv. 14–15), or to a veil that covers the face, or to a piece of cloth pulled over the head (like a modern shawl or scarf) that leaves the face revealed. As background for understanding Paul’s point in this verse, Roman men sometimes practiced the custom of pulling the loose folds of their toga over their head as an act of piety in the worship of pagan gods. Paul thus draws on the example of this pagan custom (which everyone in the Corinthian church would have thought absurd) to make the point that men should not dishonor Christ by praying according to pagan custom (8:4). He then uses the idea to prepare the way for his argument that it is equally absurd for wives to pray or prophesy in public with their heads uncovered (11:5, 11).

11:5–6 A married woman who uncovered her head in public would have brought shame to her husband. The action may have connoted sexual availability or may simply have been a sign of being unmarried. In cultures where women’s head coverings are not a sign of being married, wives do not need to cover their heads in worship, but they could obey this command by wearing some other physical symbol of being married (such as a wedding ring). While a shaven head or short hair was considered shameful for a woman in first-century Corinth, long hair was considered to be a woman’s “glory” (see v. 15).

11:7–9 See Gen. 1:26–27; 5:1; 9:6. Woman is the glory of man probably uses “glory” in the sense of “one who shows the excellence of.” Paul argues that a woman, by the excellence of her being, also shows how excellent man is, since she was taken out of man at the beginning (1 Cor. 11:8) and also was created as a helper for man at the beginning (v. 9; see also Gen. 2:20–24). Paul does not deny that the woman was also made in God’s image, something that Gen. 1:27 explicitly affirms, nor does he deny that the woman reflects God’s glory. Paul probably continues to think primarily of husband and wife here since the first man and woman were also the first married couple (Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:31). Paul’s appeal to the order of creation (cf. also 1 Cor. 11:3, 11–12) shows that his words are not merely directed to the cultural
situation of his day. The principle of male headship in marriage continues through all generations, though some cultural expressions of that principle (e.g., that women should wear head coverings) may vary.

11:10 More literally, a “wife ought to have authority over her head,” where the word “authority” refers to a head covering, which was a symbol of authority. This probably means, in the context of the Corinthian church, that the wife should wear a covering over her head as a sign that she is under her husband’s authority. Others, however, suggest that a head covering is a sign of the woman’s authority to prophesy in church, or to participate generally in the church assembly. The phrase “because of the angels” probably refers to the invisible heavenly beings (6:3; Heb. 1:7) who are present with the Corinthians when they worship (cf. Ps. 138:1) and whose presence makes propriety in worship that much more important. The NT elsewhere uses the fact that angels are watching as one motive for obeying God’s commands (see 1 Tim. 5:21; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 1:12).

11:11–12 With the use of “nevertheless,” Paul does not want what he has just said to be misinterpreted as a diminution of the importance of women. Women and men are both God’s creation and are mutually interdependent at a basic level.

11:14 Here the word “nature” probably means “your natural sense of what is appropriate for men and women”: it would be a disgrace for a man to look like a woman because of his hair style. Although the norms of appropriate hair style (and dress) may vary from culture to culture, Paul’s point is that men should look like men in that culture, and women should look like women in that culture, rather than seeking to deny or disparage the God-given differences between the sexes.

11:16 See 1:2; 4:17; 7:17; 14:33, 36 for Paul’s appeal to the practice of other churches. no such practice. That is, “no such practice” as that of those who disagree with Paul (therefore some translations render this “no other practice,” giving about the same sense). Paul’s objective is to bring the Corinthians into conformity with generally accepted Christian behavior.