

1 CORINTHIANS

gospel formed worship



OVERVIEW FOR PART 5: GOSPEL FORMED WORSHIP

Paul has been addressing the liberties and freedoms God has afforded the Corinthian Christians in regard to their everyday lives in the world. Now, he is going to address how they enjoy and practice their liberty and freedom in the gathering of the Church together.

The dominant theme throughout these four chapters is honor. Paul wants them to consider how they honor God and one another in their gatherings. The gathering of the Church is not meant to be a place where we exalt self and primarily seek opportunities for self-expression or fulfillment. The goal of our gathering together is to glorify God, make much of Jesus and consider how we might encourage or equip others. Of course, as we do this, we will also benefit ourselves since we were made to serve and it is in serving that we also thrive.

In each section Paul wants the Corinthians and us to remember how the Gospel forms our worship. We need to consider how the truths of who God is, what he has done in Christ and who he has created us to be as his Church should shape how we gather together for worship. The gospel of Jesus Christ deeply impacts how we gather together as his people.

PART 5: WEEK ONE - Head Coverings & Headship

Text: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

Paul begins his discussion by commending the Corinthians for remembering and holding to the body of teachings he delivered to them. One of those was likely the affirmation that men and women are equal image bearers of God who have the freedom to use their gifts in the gathering of God's people (Genesis 1:27; Galatians 3:28). It appears that the women felt very free to pray and prophesy in the gathering in light of their new identity in Christ. Paul affirms this but has to address where they have overstepped God's order. They have so embraced their equality that they have removed their head coverings as well.

In their culture the women who were married wore a head covering as a sign that they were committed to the covenant of marriage and honoring the headship of their husband. To go without a covering was tantamount to saying a woman was available and open to another relationship or acting like a prostitute. Paul reminds them that the reason men don't cover their head when praying and prophesying is that the head of a man is Christ. Covering their head would be the equivalent of covering Jesus in worship. The reason why a woman should cover her head is because the head of a wife is her husband. The head covering as Christians in their context was a visible sign of their recognition of the headship of Christ and the headship of a husband.

The word *head* means both source and authority. Source as the first woman came out of man and the church came from the person and work of Jesus Christ. Authority because a wife is called to submit to her husband as the church submits to Christ (Ephesians 5:22-24), and a husband is called to love his wife like Christ loves the church, giving himself up for her. Prior to Paul's instruction to the church in Ephesus about headship, he commands all believers to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

The point Paul is making is that we all are called to submit in different ways depending upon our roles as an act of submission to Jesus. As Christian brothers and sisters we submit to each other. Husbands submit to Christ and demonstrate his sacrificial love to their wives. Wives submit to their husbands as

they submit to Christ as a picture of Christ's submission to the Father and the Church's submission to Jesus.

The timeless truth we should embrace is not that we need to cover or uncover our heads, as this would not be a culturally recognized symbol, but that we are to honor God and the principles of headship and submission in culturally understandable ways today.

Read: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; Ephesians 5:21-24

1. What do these passages teach us about who Jesus is and what he has done?
2. How are we called to honor God and one another through submission and headship?
3. In what ways might we be dishonoring Christ or others in our gatherings?
4. In what ways have we dishonored men or women by adopting the practices of our culture and disregarding God's order?
5. What might it look to express the truths of these passages in our relationships today? How will we work this out through obedience?