

The Attitudes of a Godly Wife 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

Introduction:

1. The church at Corinth was a church full of problems and issues. In this letter, Paul is dealing with one issue after another, providing godly wisdom for Corinthians.
2. From the text before us, we can deduce that there was another serious problem in the church. The women in the church were abusing the liberty they had found in Christ by openly demonstrating disrespect and rebellion against their husbands.
3. The problem centered around the women repudiating a local custom - women would wear a prayer shawl to church which spoke of their submission to their husband's leadership and position.
 - History tells us that the temple prostitutes at the local, pagan temple would worship their false gods with their head uncovered and would even shave their heads as a symbol of their self-will and self-indulgence.
4. This was creating a stir in the church at Corinth, and so Paul deals with this issue. Some of the issues that Paul dealt with in the church at Corinth are not issues in our culture today. Eating meats offered to idols and wearing prayer shawls to church are not issues we face today.
5. But the principles **behind** these issues are very applicable to us today.
 - The issue of meats offered to idols taught us principles on how to exercise our liberty in Christ wisely and with grace.
6. Likewise, this issue of prayer shawls gives us some wonderful insights into a godly woman's attitude and heart, and teaches us how she is to relate to her husband in a Biblical and godly way.

A godly wife:

Recognizes her husband's position of leadership

1. The Bible is clear that the husband's core role in the home is one of headship. vs. 3;
Ephesians 5:23
 - The word "head" does not mean boss, ruler, or dictator. It carries the idea of leadership.
 - God is a God of order, and for every organization God has ordained a leader (government, church, home, workplace, marriage).
 - It is not an issue of equality, rank, intelligence, godliness, or special privilege. It is an issue of order, function, and responsibility.
 - Even within the Godhead we see this principle. God the Son is equal with God the Father, yet Christ willingly submitted Himself to the Father in all things.
Philippians 2:5-8
2. Husbands and wives are equal in Christ, but God created male and female, and God gave them different functions. They both have distinct roles. Instead of diminishing gender distinctions or blending them, the Bible insists on them. **Genesis 1:27**
 - Even in something as basic as your hair, nature tells you there is a difference between men and women. Women don't typically shave their heads or go bald. vs. 14-15

3. There was obviously a problem with these women wanting to be like the men in this local assembly. They were throwing off their prayer shawls as a symbol of this rebellion.
4. Paul says, "If you want to be like your husbands, why stop at throwing off your prayer shawls? Why not shave your heads like them, too?" vs. 6
5. Paul is getting to the root issue. The prayer shawl was simply an outward sign of an inward problem. He reminds them:
 - Husbands, you are to lead your homes, recognizing Christ as your Head and submitting to His authority.
 - Wives, you are to recognize your husband's leadership position and respond in a way that empowers him to lead.
6. When a wife has an attitude of submission, it says, "I fully expect you to lead in this relationship." This really does something special for a man.

Respects her husband's leadership publicly

1. Here is how the home is to function:
 - A man is to represent Christ's headship to his wife and children.
Ephesians 5:23, 25
 - A woman is to demonstrate respect for her husband's God-given position.
Ephesians 5:22, 24, 33
 - Children are to demonstrate respect for their parent's position. **Ephesians 6:1-2**
2. In the church at Corinth, women were publicly showing disrespect for their husband's leadership by throwing off their prayer shawls.
 - For a man to wear a prayer shawl would be symbolic of him relinquishing his God-given position of leadership. It would dishonor his headship position in the home.
 - For a woman to **not** wear a prayer shawl was symbolic of her usurping her husband's God-given position of leadership. This is the point of verses 4-7.
3. We must look beyond the cultural issue of prayer shawls, and see the root issue that Paul is dealing with here.
4. A woman is to be the glory of her man (vs. 7). She comes into his life to build him up and make him better, not demean him and make him look weak and pitiful.
5. Even if a woman's husband is less than admirable in many ways, she would never want to publicly ridicule him in any way.
6. When a wife demeans, disrespects, and ridicules her husband, she does deep damage that goes beyond the surface, straight to the heart.

Remembers why she was created

1. Paul uses this issue as an opportunity to remind these believers of God's original plan at creation.
2. The woman was taken **out** of the man and was created **for** the man. vs. 8-9;
Genesis 2:18, 21-24
 - She was not taken out of his foot for him to walk on.
 - She was not taken from his head for him to rule over her.
 - She was not taken out of his biceps for him to dominate and control.

- She was taken out of his side, so she could stand next to him and with him and be his companion.
3. God said that it was not good for Adam to be alone, but God did not take the dust and make another man. Then you would have two human races.
 4. God took the rib out of man and made woman. He made her different than man, and God did that on purpose. While equally loved by God, they would both have different functions and roles.
 5. The woman would provide nurturing, love, support, and companionship for the man. Her strengths would complement his weaknesses. Together they would form a team.
 6. The woman was made to **complement** the man, not **compete** with him. God could have made another man if that was what was needed.
 7. They would be lovers and companions, not opponents. Sin is what makes spouses opponents in the marriage relationship.
 8. Verse 11 teaches that God did not create the man and woman differently to make them **independent**, but rather **interdependent**. The woman was created out of the man, but the man receives physical life **by** the woman. vs. 12
 9. They were created to function as one flesh, each one knowing his or her function and role.

In Conclusion:

1. The prayer shawl issue was a local church issue that was unique to Corinth. Paul makes it clear in verse 16 that this was not a common custom among the churches. Paul was not laying down legalistic rules regarding head apparel for all believers.
2. But the prayer shawl issue provided a larger context for Paul to deal with these vital issues in the marriage relationship.
3. As a godly woman recognizes her husband's leadership and operates under God's prescribed order of headship, verse 10 teaches that she is not only a testimony to her husband, children, and local assembly - she is a testimony to the angelic host.
4. Even angels carefully observe the conduct of the body of Christ, and learn the truths of grace as we demonstrate them in our daily lives. **Ephesians 3:10**