



## A Worship Discussion Guide for Individuals, Groups & Families for the week of January 14, 2024

Read the Bible passage aloud in your group meeting. This is a worship discussion guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for your meeting, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

### Warm Up

- Have you ever made a change because of something you read in God's Word? What was it? What was that process like?

### I Corinthians 11:2-16

### Head Coverings

<sup>2</sup>Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>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.

- The Corinthians had a number of cultural practices regarding head coverings. Men would cover their heads when offering sacrifices to pagan gods. Women removed their veil to declare independence from their marriage. Temple prostitutes did not cover their heads in pagan rituals.
- It appears that some women in the church at Corinth exercised their freedom in Christ by getting rid of their head coverings. What is Paul's general response to this?
- Paul uses the word "head" in reference to Christ, husbands, and God. "Head" can carry the sense of "honor", "origin", or "authority". Which sense does it appear to carry in verse 3?
- Paul is reminding us that all Persons of the Trinity are equal, yet there is relational order and different roles among the Father, Son, and Spirit. Why is that an important starting place for Paul in this discussion about men and women in Christian worship? (3)
- Paul is not concerned that the Corinthian women were praying or prophesying in worship, but that they were doing it in a way to bring dishonor to their gathering and to Christ. What does it mean to "dishonor" your "head"? (4-5)
- For the Corinthian women, it would be scandalous to cut their hair short, so Paul likens disregarding head coverings to a shaven head (5-6). What is Paul hoping the Corinthians will grasp through this comparison?
- Bible scholar Leon Morris writes, "It can be assumed that respectable Greek women wore a head covering in public. If so, the practice of the Corinthian Christian ladies outraged the proprieties. Paul rejected it with decision. It is no part of the life of the Christian needlessly to flout accepted conventions." Likewise, Paul encourages men to consider others in the church and not wear head covering and hairstyles that would outwardly identify them with pagan worship (4, also 7, 14). Can you think of any analogy to our church worship today?

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<sup>7</sup>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. <sup>8</sup>For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. <sup>9</sup>Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. <sup>10</sup>That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.

<sup>11</sup>Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; <sup>12</sup>for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. <sup>13</sup>Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? <sup>14</sup>Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, <sup>15</sup>but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. <sup>16</sup>If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.

- **Paul references the creation of man and woman in [Genesis 1:26-25](#). What is his point? (7-10)**
- **Paul envisions that women would pray and prophesy in worship (5, 13). However, later in this same letter, Paul prohibits certain women from speaking publicly in worship ([1 Corinthians 14:29-35](#)). How do we reconcile the two teachings of Paul? What is their common principle?**
- **Though we are free in Christ, what is an example of how we might be compelled by Christ to follow a cultural norm in worship? How does this all underscore our freedom in Christ?**
- **Reflect on this week's passage together, and use it as a guide for a time of prayer.**

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