

“IF A MAN HAS LONG HAIR”

Bryan Matthew Dockens

Styles fluctuate through the generations and it is sometimes fashionable for a man to grow his hair long, although that is seldom, if ever, the prevailing custom. It may come as a surprise, but Scripture addresses this issue. What seems harmless is regarded by inspiration as inappropriate.

“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” (1st Corinthians 11:13-15).

Standing alone, this is confusing, but the context pertains to headship; Paul opened the subject with this statement: *“the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God”* (3). Woman submits to man, man submits to Christ, and Christ submits to God, but God and Christ are in heaven, so this order of submission is only visible on earth in the interaction between woman and man. To manifest the headship of man, woman is to cover her head (5-6) and man is not to do so (4, 7). Specifically, her hair is the covering God intends (15), so man should not have his hair long (14).

This is not as trivial as some may choose to regard it. *“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”* (8-10). The apostle appealed to the order of creation, just as he did when teaching that women must *“learn in silence with all submission”* (1st Timothy 2:8-15). If the issue of hair length is passé, then so, too, is the issue of women learning in silence, but that cannot be since both subjects are founded in a timeless truth relative to creation.

Paul also made reference to heavenly creatures. *“For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels”* (1st Corinthians 11:10). This is relevant because *“the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day”* (Jude 6). If even angels can be punished for abandoning the roles God assigned them, then men and women better not forget the positions of headship and submission God gave them, respectively.

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In short, a woman’s long hair covers her head, by which she submits to the headship of man as ordained of God. Accordingly, a man must keep his hair short as a visible sign of his headship.

Sincere curiosity may leave some wondering how to reconcile the principle set forth herein with the vow of the Nazirite (Numbers 6:2-21). This vow was presented in the Law of Moses as a voluntary commitment (2) whereby the one under the vow swore off all grape products (3-4), refrained from haircuts (5), refrained from contact with the dead (6-12), and offered up specific sacrifices (13-21). It was a temporary consecration (4, 5, 6, 13), so, ordinarily, the Nazirite’s hair would not grow excessively. If a man had his hair trimmed regularly and then entered into the vow for several weeks or even a few months, then the hair would still not be hanging down like a woman’s.

Particular examples stand out. Samson was placed under the vow of the Nazirite by God prior to his conception (Judges 13:4-5), and Samuel, if not under a total Nazirite consecration, and he probably was not, was sanctified by his mother before his birth with a promise to never cut his hair (1st Samuel 1:11). Under lifelong commitments to refrain from haircuts, these men would have had hair not just as long as women’s, but longer! The vow was imposed on those men as subjugation. They were meant to be kept humble, submitting to the headship of God in an extreme and conspicuous manner.

Exceptions are just that: exceptional. It is not right to cite cases from the Old Covenant that were intentionally extraordinary as reasons to disregard straightforward New Testament commands that rely on the order of creation, on angels, and on the submission of Christ!

Besides the approved examples of Samson and Samuel, other instances of long-haired men in Scripture are not met with divine sanction. Absalom, son of David, only cut his hair annually and when he did so, it weighed four pounds (2nd Samuel 14:25-26)! Absalom was a terribly self-centered man (18:18) who rebelled against his father’s reign (15:1-12) and eventually died as a direct result of his lengthy locks (18:9-15). The locusts that John saw ascending from the bottomless pit and who would torment men for five months are described as having *“their faces... like the faces of men”* and *“hair like women’s hair”* (Revelation 9:7-8). That very description of apparent femininity is prima facie evidence that God disapproves. It is unnatural for those with the faces of men to wear their hair as women do.

God wants men and women to be different and to look different.

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard

Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.

Members Expected.

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

PROVERBS 25:11

"Unlearning is of the same importance as learning because to unlearn something is to be conscious of what we have learned and our ability to change it."

– J. Mike Fields

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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NEVER BLAME THE CIRCUMSTANCES

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It is easy, when one fails God and yields to sin, to blame the circumstances. The excuses are predictable:

- "I wouldn't have stolen if I wasn't so poor."
- "I wouldn't have lashed out so angrily if they hadn't provoked me."
- "I wouldn't have cheated if the professor knew how to teach a class."
- "I wouldn't have stepped out of my marriage if my wife wasn't such a nag."
- "I would have submitted to my husband if he was more loving."

None of these rationalizations hold up to scrutiny, though. For one reason or another, insubordination against God was the outcome.

Consider the first sin perpetrated by humanity (Genesis 3). Eve dwelt in literal Paradise. She had access all day, every day to any fruit she wanted, with only one restriction. She was married to a man who was, until then, actually sinless. He was the most handsome man on earth and he was totally present. Yet, she rebelled against her husband's leadership and against the Lord's rule. She lusted for the only thing that was withheld from her. Therein, she fell and took the man down with her.

Circumstances may increase the appeal of temptation, but they are never to blame. Accountability is inescapable.

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