

A WOMAN'S HEADCOVERING



JOHN P. ROTHACKER

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Printed in U.S.A.

INTRODUCTION

The following teaching about a woman's headcovering is an exposition of a biblical custom practiced faithfully by all godly women from the beginnings of recorded history until our present generations. It was a part of a woman's regular dress in worship, and in biblical times a part of her regular daily attire as well. Now, within this last decade, we have been left in most of Christendom with but a last vestige, and that is when a bride is veiled during the marriage ceremony.

One problem in understanding this doctrine is the ambiguity of one or two verses in most translations, which this teaching hopes to clarify. Moreover, the rejection of this custom is a sign of the times, an indication that we are in the last days, the most lawless generation ever, before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I, myself, found the scripture in English very difficult and seemingly contradictory until I received the gift of apostleship in 1967. Then though the stewardship of this grace, there was given to me revelation by the Holy Spirit to be shared with His body, His bride, the church.

I have seen many women blessed with this practice and confirmed in their faith, not only by the scriptures, but by revelations from the Lord in dreams, visions, prophecies, and experiences that thrill the soul as only obedience in righteousness can do.

I submit this to you humbly, sincerely, and with my heart filled with love for one of God's greatest gift to man, a godly woman.

John P. Rothacker

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This is another most interesting part of a woman's responsibility to God, to the spiritual beings, and to her fellow man. Paul wrote a very clear teaching on this to the Corinthians. However, as it appears in the King James English it is admittedly very difficult until one studies it carefully with an open and a seeking heart, with much prayer, and spiritual enlightenment in the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, I would like to quote the first sixteen verses of I Corinthians, chapter 11, and then expound upon them verse by verse.

- :1 "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.
- :2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.
- :3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.
- :4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered dishonoureth his head.
- :5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.
- :6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.
- :7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.
- :8 For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.
- :9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.
- :10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

- :11 Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.
- :12 For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.
- :13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?
- :14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?
- :15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.
- :16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.”

Now then, let us start at verse 1 and proceed from there.

- :1 “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”

I believe this verse is connected with the preceding paragraph in which Paul is telling us not to offend anyone whether Jew, Gentile, or Christian. It is good to study the last half of the 10th chapter, however, in order to set our attitude for the teachings of the 11th chapter. Paul says he tries to please everyone and that the Corinthians are to imitate him as he imitates Christ.

The Greek word used here is *mimetai*. It is derived from the word *mimos* which means actor, where we get our word mimic. God is interested in the reality of what he has put on the inside of us finding expression on the outside of us, in our every action.

This thought of imitating the faith of other Christians appears several places throughout the scriptures. Notice that it is often in connection with imitating Christ or God. Paul wrote the Thessalonians that they had become imitators of the apostles, the Lord, and of the churches of God (I Thes. 1:6; 2:14). He wrote the Ephesians to be imitators of God since they were his children and to walk in love just the same way Christ walked, giving themselves for each other as Christ did for them (Eph. 5:12). When Paul wrote to the Hebrews he told them to remember their leaders who had spoken the word of God to them and to imitate their faith, and to consider the outcome of their behavior (Heb. 13:7-8). Then he wrote that verse quoted so often, “**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.**” We need to consider that Christ is the same today as He was when Paul wrote this letter to

the Corinthians and we should desire to imitate the faith of those faithful Christians portrayed in the New Testament scriptures, especially if we desire the same kind of results that they accomplished for God. Notice also that we are to be like Christ. Many false teachings are prevalent that would discourage Christians from this high calling in Christ Jesus, saying that it is impossible to be like Christ. His standard is still perfection! **“Be ye perfect even as your heavenly father is perfect”** (Mt. 5:48). What kind of a God would expect the impossible? God has only one standard and that is Christ.

:2 **“Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.”**

In verse 2, the word **ordinances** in Greek is *paradosis* and means “traditions.” It is consistently translated properly as such in the KJV everywhere else except in this one instance. The Jews were making the word of God of none effect by their traditions, and unfortunately, so are we today. However, traditions may be good or bad, the word simply means the things handed down from one generation to another, either orally or in writing. An example of this is in Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians in which he tells them to **“stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle”** (II Thes. 2:15).

:3 **“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”**

In the third verse, Paul gives divine order. First, God the Father; then, Christ the Son; then, the man; and then, the woman. We could add here, then, the children, but it is not appropriate for the tradition in question so of course Paul, writing by the Spirit, didn’t add this. The important thing to realize is that this is God’s divine order, not Paul’s or man’s. Paul’s whole argument is from God’s word and God’s creation as we shall see, not from man’s peculiar interpretations. It has nothing to do with the issue of equality, ability, intelligence, or cultural factors.

:4 **“Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.”**

Next, Paul writes in the 4th verse that a man should not pray to God with a covering on his head. In this verse the word covering doesn’t appear in the Greek and so literally it should read, **“Every man praying or prophesying** [this is not inspired preaching, for all preaching from God is inspired, but is

speaking forth in the known language directly as the Holy Spirit gives the words supernaturally. It may be forthtelling or foretelling.] **with anything down upon** [Greek: *kata*] **his head puts to shame** [Greek: *kataischunei*] **his head.**” This means shaming himself, his own head; however, when we do anything that shames ourselves we in sense bring shame to our spiritual head which in this case is Christ. Thus we can tell by this verse alone, the apostle is referring to a literal, physical covering placed down upon the head. And concerning a man’s covering, we understand that even today it remains a shame for a man to pray with his hat on; thus, men take off their hats not only when they pray but also to show respect when they pledge allegiance to the flag, or greet a lady.

:5 **“But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.”**

Interestingly, this is in keeping with the general sentiment in Greek culture that women should not even appear in public without their heads covered. However in some higher (more refined, liturgical) Greek cults women prayed uncovered.

Verse 5 starts out with the simple Greek connective *de* and can be translated “and” or “but,” and from the flow of similar thought we see it should be “and.” Notice this exhortation is for “**every**” woman, not just the married ones or special saints. Also, this teaching concerns two of the most important aspects of any Christian’s ministry: praying, which is our talking to God, and prophesying, which is God talking to us.

The word “her” you might notice in some printings of the King James version is italicized (in this printing it is regular, not bold) because it is not in the Greek text. The “her” is implied but the construction helps us realize Paul is not referring to her head as being her husband but to her own personal physical head. The word “uncovered” is the Greek word *akatakalupto* and means unveiled or uncovered. The root word *kalupto* is a verb meaning “to veil,” taken from the word *kalumma*, meaning “a veil worn by women.” The prefix *a* means “not” and *kata* means “down.” The word “dishonoureth” is the Greek word *kataischunei* and means literally “to put to shame, or ashamed” and is so translated elsewhere in the scriptures as for example when Paul writes to the Romans: **“and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”** If she puts herself to shame it is the same dishonor as having been shaven, the Greek word for “were shaven” being the perfect tense, passive voice participle. It is from the word *xuron* which means razor. It means to presently have all the

hair shaved off bald previous to the present time. It appears it was a disgrace in that day. Thus this verse should read literally “and every woman praying or prophesying unveiled the head puts to shame her own head.”

Besides the shame to her own head, her own self, an unveiled woman also in a sense brings shame to her spiritual head, which in the case of a wife is her husband. This is because a husband is responsible for his wife’s holiness, behavior, and life, and he is to love her as his own body, thus, any defect in her is a reflection upon him, just as we as the Lord’s body can bring either shame or glory to Him (Eph. 5:22-33; Heb. 6:6; Eph. 3:21).

Now, concerning a woman’s veiling, it is most important to note that it is still the custom in Judaism and in all of Christendom for the bride to be veiled during the marriage ceremony. In addition, it is amusing to know that the Jewish groom examines his bride unveiled before the marriage ceremony to assure himself that he is not being deceived like Jacob was, as when his father-in-law, Laban, substituted Leah for Rachel (Gen. 29:15-30).

This custom of a bride veiling herself during the marriage ceremony is the last vestige of this biblical tradition for most of the church. However, various Christian sects, and other religions that take some of their customs from the revelations of God such as Islam and Hinduism, still practice this custom as part of their regular daily dress, and it is a reflection of their proper behavioral order concerning the headship of the man. Sadly to say, this is in marked contrast to the disorder that we see in much of the church today.

:6 “For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shave, let her be covered.”

The sixth verse tells us that if a woman does not have her head covered or veiled she is to be shorn. The imperative mood, middle voice of the Greek verb indicates the command to go herself and have her hair cut very short. If, however, it is a shame for a woman to have her head shorn (the Greek aorist infinitive middle voice indicates to have had her head shorn for herself) or to have her head shaven (present infinitive passive) she must be covered (the present imperative passive indicates it is a command to presently be covered). Now the word for shorn is *keirasthai*, from the Greek verb meaning to shear very short as one shears the wool from sheep. It appears only two other places in scriptures, once in referring to the Lord Jesus as being led as “**a lamb dumb before his shearer**” and the other is referring to Paul “**having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow**” (Acts 8:32; 18:18). We also know that this custom was one of cutting all the hair off, either by shaving or cutting

it very close. A GI haircut might be a good example. The point to be made is this: Shorn hair is not the usual short women's hair of today.

:7 “For even a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch, as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.”

Now in Verse 7 Paul begins the explanation of why the man is not to have anything on his head and why the woman is. To help understand this, let us make a simple but profound statement recognized throughout the centuries. That is, “Christian ritual or practice must conform to and express Christian doctrine.” This is true of the woman's headcovering, which shows their subjection, dependence, and difference of nature. It is also true of Christian baptism which is to be by immersion, the Greek word *baptizo* meaning to dip or immerse, and showing the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection; and our identification with him in this, into the new resurrected life, the life of Christ, the only one acceptable to our heavenly Father.

Accurate expression is also found in the Lord's supper or communion. The wine symbolizes the blood of Christ for our sins and the bread symbolizes the body of Christ, his own physical body beaten for our physical healing and the oneness of his many membered body, the church, also to be broken for one another (I Cor. 11:17-34; 10:16-17; Mt. 8:16-17; I Pet. 2:24; Eph. 2:13-16; Jn. 13:34; I Jn. 4:11). The original bread was unleavened, symbolizing that Christ was without sin and we as His body are to be without sin (Ex. 12:8; I Cor. 5:7-8). The bread and wine were part of an actual feast, the Passover, meaning we must feast upon Christ totally and eat every word that proceeds from God (Jn. 6:48-51; Mt. 4:4). The meat was eaten with bitter herbs, reminding us of the bitterness of sin's bondage in this world's system. Also, the herbs remind us that Christ gives us all the essential nutrients for good health: spiritually, mentally, and physically. The lamb pictures Christ, the Lamb of God, who gives us strength and the building material for a sound body and life; and the bread, also Christ, gives us the energy and vitality we all need. The truth of subjection portrayed by the headcovering, the female with and the male without, points out His title of Lord. The Lord's Supper points out our salvation, and the name Jesus means saviour. Our baptism points out our union with Him in spirit, having received the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The title Christ means the anointed one. Therefore, we have His titles, Lord and Christ, and name, Jesus, forever portrayed before us.

Now then, the man owes it (Greek: *opheilei*) not to have the head covered because he was created both in the image of and the glory of God. The Greek word for image is *eikon* and means not only the image or likeness but also

suggests representation. On the other hand, the woman is the glory of the man. The Greek word for *doxa* can be translated glory, praise, honor, or dignity. It is a very versatile word. In the scriptures, a person is said to be the glory of another when their personal qualities are to give credit to and show forth the glory of another. Examples are the Thessalonian Christians being the glory of Paul, Silas, and Timothy; and the apostles being the glory of Christ (I Thes. 2:20; II Cor. 8:23). When someone has another as his or her glory they are directly responsible for the other's welfare and growth and have direct authority from God to accomplish this. To a large degree then, what that other person becomes is due to them and, therefore, reflects upon them, either to their glory or shame (Eph. 5:25-27).

Now Paul gives us two reasons why the woman is the glory of the man:

First in verse 8 because of how she was created.

:8 **“For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.”**

The word “of” is the Greek word *ek* meaning “out of.” The woman was created out of the man, not the other way around.

Secondly, given in verse 9, because of why she was created.

:9 **“Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.”**

The Greek word translated “for” is the word *dia* in the accusative case meaning “on account of.” Therefore, man was not created on account of the woman but on account of God's purpose, or, for God.

:10 **“For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.”**

Now then, in verse 10 Paul says, “**for this cause**” (Greek: *dia*, and the case is singular and refers to verse 7, “on account of” the fact that the woman is the glory of the man) she has a debt. The word “**ought**” is from the Greek word *opheilei* meaning something that is owed, a legal debt for example. What she owes is “**to have authority** [here the Greek word translated power is *exousian* and means authority in today's English. This is a very significant difference in many scripture verses. For it is one thing to have the authority and another to have the power, *dunamis*, to back it up. God has both!] **upon** [on from the Greek *epi*, upon] **the head, on account of [dia] the angels.**”

Paul calls the woman's head veiling authority, and therefore, when done in faith it is more than just a sign that she is under subjection to the man and therefore to Christ. Besides the fact that she is to wear a veiling because she is man's glory, it is because of the angels who are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to us from the Lord whatever is appropriate. The letter to the Hebrews reveals some very important facts concerning the conditional aspects of this ministry to us. It is said of the angels,

“are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for [Greek: *dia*, on account of, for the sake of] them who shall be heirs of salvation. Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by [through] angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?” (Heb. 1:14 - 2:4)

Beloved, we read about how the law, which was ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator, Moses, was confirmed in blessing and judgment by God's angels (Gal. 3:19). Paul had just given examples of this to the Corinthians in the 10th chapter just before this teaching on the head-veiling in the 11th chapter (I Cor. 10:1-13). God's Old Covenant people had been born again, born of water and Spirit, in a perfect picture of water and Spirit when they were baptized into Moses in the sea (water) and cloud (Spirit). Also, they, as we, all drank of the same spiritual drink, Christ, and yet many were overthrown and destroyed (I Cor. 10:4-5; 12:13). Paul says these things were written for us, for **“our examples,”** and **“they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come”** (I Cor. 10:6, 11).

The Lord Jesus teaches us that each child has a guardian angel and there is no reason to believe he doesn't stay with us through our life (Mt. 18:10). Evidence abounds that they remain. Remember the time when Peter was released from prison by an angel of God and he went immediately to the church, a prayer meeting in Mary's house, the mother of John Mark? When Rhoda went to the door she became so excited she left Peter standing outside and went and told the group and they replied, **“it is his angel”** (Acts 12:15). Other scriptures are such as those written earlier in the letter to the Corinthians when Paul says that he and the other apostles **“are made a spectacle unto**

the world, and to angels, and to men” (I Cor. 4:9). In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul reveals that it is through the church, that the manifold wisdom of God might be known now to the rulers and authorities in the heavenlies (Eph. 3:10). Also, there is ample evidence that there is more than one angel available to each of us. Satan, who often knows the word of God better than we do, reveals this when he tempts Jesus at the beginning of His ministry with the scripture, **“He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone”** (Psa. 91:11; Lk 4:10-11). Later when He was being betrayed to death in Gethsemane, Jesus said, **“Don’t you think I can call upon My Father and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?”** (Mt. 26:53). At that time a Roman legion under Augustus numbered 6,826 men, 6100 on foot and 726 on horses. More than twelve legions would be more than 81,912 angels, more than enough to get the job done Id say!

Jesus also spoke concerning angels that if we deny Him before men, He would deny us before the angels of God. But if we were faithful before men, He would confess us before the angels of God (Lk. 12:8-9). Let us be faithful to the teachings of our Lord also before mankind! Most Christians are just simply not aware of the hindering of ministry to themselves by these angelic beings because of their own lack of knowledge and obedience.

:11 “Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.”

Now in verse 11 Paul puts the relationship of the man and woman in good perspective, so that no man should boast in himself, when he adds that the man is not without , apart from, separated, or independent of the woman, neither the woman of the man, in the Lord.

:12 “For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.”

This is because , Paul explains in verse 12, as the woman is out of (Greek: *ek*) the man by creation, so also the man is through (Greek: *dia*, with the genitive) the woman by birth and all things are out of (*ek*), originate from, God. Here is another good reminder that this truth about Gods order and design is from God, Himself, not Paul or ourselves.

:13 “Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?”

- :14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?
 :15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.”

Now in verse 13, together with verses 14 and 15, we come to really another thought where Paul is going to make his appeal not from Gods written word but from what His spoken word created and the Corinthians should understand since their minds had been enlightened by the Holy Spirit. Since the Corinthians were still carnal, even though they had all the spiritual gifts operating, Paul understood that they might not comprehend all the spiritual reasons for this custom (I Cor. 3:1-7). However, since they were born of the Spirit, he believed they should comprehend the natural creation of God. Thus Paul asked them first, in verse 13, to judge (Greek: in themselves) if it is not unbecoming or unfit for a woman to pray without her head veiled. Also we might ask, would it not be just as unbecoming for a man to stand and pray with a hat on? Second, in verses 14 & 15, Paul asked them to also look at nature to give them enlightenment and understanding of a difference God has made concerning a man and a woman’s hair, because this difference teaches us the truth concerning the headship of the man and God giving him authority over the woman.

- :14 “Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?”
 :15 “But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.”

Paul asks in verse 14, if nature (Greek: *phusis*, meaning natural law, natural order which gives us a “natural sense of what is right and wrong”) does not teach them that it is a dishonor (Greek: *atima*, meaning without honor, and meaning literally without value, therefore a man devaluates himself) for a man to have long hair. Paul knows this to be a fact because the writings of the Greeks at that time indicate that men did not let their hair grow long. This is still true today in practically every civilized society in the world. However, as open rebellion becomes more manifested throughout the world this natural custom will often reverse itself by demonic influence.

Paul, in verse 14, having stated the possibility of a man having long hair and it consequently bringing shame to him, now contrasts in verse 15 the possibility of a woman having long hair and it consequently bringing glory to her. He says, “**if**” a woman has long hair, it is for her honor and beauty, it is a natural ornament of grace given by God. One needs only to look at long hair on

men and women to see not only the remarkable differences in natural beauty and manageability but also in aesthetic appeal and social acceptance.

Please note, Paul does not say that a woman is required to have long hair. The same statement is made concerning the man as the woman and both statements are in the subjective mood, meaning “if” a man or “if” a woman should have long hair, not that they must have long hair.

Now in verse 15 we come to one of the most important phrases in this teaching. It is not sufficiently accurate in most translations, therefore, one might receive the opposite meaning from what was originally intended and written. First, we will repeat the phrase in the King James version. Then we will give an exact word for word translation of the Greek phrase because it is of supreme importance. The meanings of the Greek words appear in English beneath them:

“for her hair is given her for a covering.”

oti *é* *kome* *anti*
 “because the long hair instead of

peribolaiou *dedotai* *aute*
 a wrapper is given to her.”

Notice the long hair is not given for a covering, meaning not “as” or “to be” a covering, but instead of a covering! Let us look at several of these Greek words more precisely. First, *oti* is not the usual word rendered “for” but it means “that” or “because.” *Kome* means “long hair” as worn by women and not by men. Here “her hair” is the same Greek root word translated “**long hair**” in the preceding 14th verse, and “**long hair**” in the first part of this 15th verse, and these three times in these two verses are the only times it is used in the New Testament. *Thrix* is the regular Greek word used elsewhere for just “hair,” whether of men, women, or animals, throughout the New Testament (Mt. 3:4; 5:36; 10:30; Lk. 7:38, 44; Rev. 1:14). *Anti* means “instead of” or “in place of” or “in lieu of.” *Anti* is the same word used similarly in Luke 11:11 when Jesus says, “**If a son shall ask for bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for [anti, in place of] a fish give him a serpent?**” Jesus is obviously not saying here that a serpent is a fish, but asking if a serpent would be an appropriate substitute for a fish. *Peribolaiou* comes from two Greek words, *peri* meaning “around” and *ballo* meaning “to throw, or cast.” It literally means, therefore, something which one throws around himself and is used for example of a cloak, mantle, or vesture. It appears one other place in the New Testament and that is in the letter to the

Hebrews. Here is described the time when the earth and the heavens shall perish (Heb. 1:12). It is a quote from the psalmist, who says to God, “**And as a vesture [mantle] shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed**” (Psa. 102:25).

Therefore, beloved, the scripture never states that the woman’s hair is the veil, which this teaching instructs her to wear while praying or prophesying. Rather, when one reads verses 13, 14, and 15 together and studies them together, one can see and understand that Paul says that long hair is in nature the distinguishing feature between men and women to show forth Gods original plan and purpose regarding the headship of the man over the woman, that he is the authority between her and Christ. That is, in nature a woman’s long hair is given to her symbolizing and in place of a material covering. Therefore, she is to have a veil upon her head while praying or prophesying.

:16 “**But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.**”

Verse 16 is the last verse in this teaching and is mistranslated many times as one can readily see by comparing many of the new translations, one with another. Here the King James version is accurate. Paul writes that “**if any man seems** [Greek: *dokei*, meaning to think, have an opinion] **to be contentious** [Greek: *philoneikos*, meaning love of strife, eagerness to contend], **we do not have any such custom, neither do the churches of God.**” Now, what custom do they not have? The answer is the first statement in the argument just given, namely that they do not have women praying to God uncovered or unveiled, for it is not comely (Greek: *prepon*, meaning becoming, proper), verse 13. Paul means there would be some that love to quarrel about this so he appeals to the practice of his apostolic team and the testimony of all the churches planted by all of the other apostles as support for this important doctrine and Christian custom. You see, the ways of other followers of Jesus are significant confirming witness of the will of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit when in accordance with the word of God.

The fact that Christians will be contentious about this matter is anticipated. There are various reasons for this. Some reject Gods word because they love to honor God with their lips but their hearts are not completely with Him, and therefore they prefer to honor their own traditions rather than Gods word (Mk. 7:6-9). Others are “**blind leaders of the blind**” (Mt. 15:14). Some are blind because they are seeking fame and fortune (high positions and salaries) for themselves rather than pursuing truth for the glory of God and resting secure in the provisions of God by faith. They are afraid of losing money (salary, retirement, and finances for their own initiatives), praise

of men, the chief seats in their “Christian Synagogues,” or members in their little kingdoms (Jn. 7:17; 12: 42-43; Lk. 16:13-14; II Pet. 2:1-3). Still others, rather than leap for joy when persecuted for righteousness and Jesus sake, or for fear of being shunned by “their fellow church members,” prefer to be one of the lukewarm crowd (Lk. 6:22-23). And then there are those who can simply care less, their hearts are so cold and indifferent, having gotten caught up in this wicked, lawless, and undisciplined generation (Mt. 24:12). Having rejected the truth of God, they all grieve the Holy Spirit, receive discipline by the grace of God, dishonor the head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ, are denied blessings from the ministry of angels, and suffer the eternal consequences (Tit. 2:10-15).

It is interesting to note that in the strict Orthodox Jewish synagogues the women do cover their heads, although in the rest of Judaism they usually do not. However, the Orthodox Jews have a written law for the men that is the opposite of Biblical tradition. They must wear a headcovering, a skullcap known in Yiddish as a “yarmulke” and in Hebrew as a “kippah.” If a man enters without a covering, a male member will take him out and have him cover his head with a yarmulke from a supply available in the entering vestibule. They do this because of rabbinical tradition, which teaches that it is showing reverence for the Lord. They note in their writings that it was a custom of the early Romans for the slaves to cover their head while free men went bareheaded, therefore, they cover their heads to show they are servants of the Lord. Another reason was that since the “Gentiles” (Christians) prayed uncovered, and they did not want to imitate the “heathen” custom of men, the rabbis determined that praying bareheaded must be avoided. Thus, covering the head for men served as a means of Jewish identification and as a barrier against assimilation. It is believed that this Jewish custom did not originate until the 4th century A.D. Now, it serves as a means of showing allegiance to Jewish tradition. Paul wrote concerning the Jews, “**For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge**” (Rom. 10:2). This Jewish tradition for men is exactly contrary to Gods truth as revealed in the Old Testament scriptures from which Paul writes. However, in the Old Testament men did cover their heads when displaying shame, dishonor, and mourning (Jer. 14:3-4; II Sam. 15:30; Esth. 6:12). Women on the other hand used a covering as part of their regular dress (Hebrew: *sanif*, meaning to wrap, “**vail**” Gen. 24:65; 38:14, 19; *radid*, spreading, “**veil**” S.S. 5:7; “**vail**” Isa. 3:23; *raalah*, fluttering, “**mufflers**” Isa. 3:19; *sammah*, to fasten on, “**locks**” or more accurately “**veil**” S.S. 4:1, 3; 6:7; Isa. 47:2; *mitpachath*, “**vail**” Ruth 3:15, and “**wimple**” Isa. 3:22; *mispahah*, spread out, “**kerchiefs**” Eze. 13:18, 21; *tsaniyphah*, “**hoods**” Isa. 3:23).

It is also interesting to note that there is a custom in Judaism, based upon the scripture but not widely known, for the bridegroom to throw the skirt of his robe over his bride and cover her head with it, thereby signifying his protection for her (Ruth 3:9). However, the usual custom is for the bride to be veiled during the marriage ceremony.

Now then, we can see clearly from this rather detailed study that God intends for the woman to have a literal, material covering upon her own physical head. The reason is because she is man's glory and is to indicate to the ministering angels present her subjection to the man's authority and therefore to Christ's authority. We are supposed to be able to figure this out by the way God made woman to wear longer hair than the man does. Paul's conclusion is from the how and why of the creation of the woman, who is from and for the man.

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS

Let us now consider some of the objections often given this teaching and see how impossible it is to substantiate any of them from the scripture.

1. "A woman's hair is her covering."
 - A. We have shown from the Greek text that the scripture does not say this. Her hair is given in place of a covering in natural creation.
 - B. The Greek word used in reference to a woman's hair in verse 15 is not the same Greek word used throughout this portion of scripture properly translated "veil." In nature the long hair is what God gives a woman around her head symbolizing her position, like a mantle does, and is for her glory. The veil is what the woman puts down upon her head, covering her hair, and is also symbolic of her husband's authority that is upon her.

- C. If hair were the woman's covering, it would also be the man's. Long hair on a woman would be a large covering, short hair on a man would be a small covering, and that would completely contradict this teaching.
- D. If hair were the woman's covering, then to be uncovered would be to have no hair at all and verse 5 would not make any sense. It would read, "and every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with no hair on her head puts to shame her head; for that is the same as is she were shaven." Which means, "if she has no hair, it is as if she has no hair," and that would be a nonsensical statement.
- E. If she has "no covering" or hair, how can she then proceed to have her hair shorn? (verse 6).
- F. And if it's a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, to instruct her to have hair (the covering) would be a needless statement, because she would have let her hair grow already since it would be a shame not to have hair; or else she would have gotten a wig, that's for sure (verse 6).
- G. If hair were the covering and the custom was for women to wear hair, there would be no purpose in Paul having written at length giving instructions to cover the head meaning to have hair.

2. "A woman's long hair is her covering."

- A. Same as in 1 A.
- B. Same as in 1 B.
- C. Same as in 1 C.
- D. If long hair were the woman's covering, then verse 5 would say that wearing short hair would be the same as having your head shaved, which most definitely it is not. Just ask most women today!
- E. If long hair were the covering Paul is insisting upon, he would have made a plain statement requiring long hair. Also, the Old Testament scriptures would have given us such a statement, as the godly practice of a woman wearing a veil upon her head was not new with Paul or the New Testament church. Instead, Paul says "if" a woman has long hair, not that she must have long hair!
- F. What Paul is insisting upon is a *katakalupto*, a veil, the well-known headcovering of women for centuries, not *kome*, long hair.

3. "My husband is my covering."

- A. If her husband were her covering, how then could she be uncovered? The scripture says to be uncovered (according to this reasoning, without

the husband) is to dishonor her head, and it is no dishonor to be single or a widow.

- B. Some might say that to be “covered” means to be in subjection to the husband, but why then would the husband who is also to be in subjection to his head, which is Christ, be instructed to be “uncovered?”

4. “Having to put a covering upon the head is legalism, it is bondage!”

- A. It is not legalism but sound Christian doctrine. Most people today will remember that it has been the tradition throughout the centuries. Not until recently, with the increase in satanic deceptions, have the customs of the majority of the Christian sects been changing. Requiring obedience to God’s Word is not legalism but righteousness! Legalism is defined as “justification by works rather than by grace.” Uncalled for legalistic requirements would be to enforce the type and color of the covering, for example.
- B. Is it bondage to put on a dress or other suitable clothing before coming into the presence of other people? Many women take quite some time at this! How much simpler and therefore less “bondage” it is to dress properly for God, the elect angels, and so as to instruct and not offend other Christians.

5. “Even if the woman does wear a covering it doesn’t mean she is in subjection. Therefore it doesn’t do any good.”

- A. Because some people are not sincere about faith in Christ and our identification with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection, should we discontinue Christian baptism? Of course not!
- B. If some people take the Lord’s Supper unworthily should we then discontinue it? God forbid!
- C. Even when a woman is not in subjection, it will be a constant reminder of her disobedience and why she isn’t experiencing the fullness of the Spirit of Christ. Many women do not seem to realize this is the cause of so many of their frustrations, the grieving of the Holy Spirit within, and unanswered prayers (I Pet. 3:1-7).

6. “Paul was writing a deep mystery and we must see beyond the letter of the word for ‘the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life.’ Paul was writing in regards to moving in the Spirit, and the relationship of Christ and the church.”

- A. Paul was indeed writing deep spiritual truth but the truth is always simple. All we must do is have a heart to understand (Pro. 3:5-6). The understanding then comes from the Lord and His word (Psa. 119:104). Until our heart turns to the Lord concerning obedience, a veil of blindness will forever remain (II Cor. 3:13-16).
- B. The scriptures always say what they mean and mean what they say. To substitute other meanings for words is always an impossibility if consistency of the scriptures is to be maintained.
- C. Many people mistake the meaning of the phrase, “the letter of the word.” If this does not mean that we should take the literal interpretation or meaning of words, then how could we understand any scripture for it would not mean what it says? If it means, as some people would like to say, that we can give “other underlying” meaning to the words, then the scripture can be made to say anything a demonic spirit influences someone to give it (I Tim. 4:1). What Paul did mean can be clearly understood when we read the words accurately in their entire context.

Paul said of himself and Timothy, “**Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament [Covenant]; not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?**” (I Cor. 3:5-8)

We see Paul is talking about the Old Covenant in contrast to the New Covenant. The Old Covenant had many laws and they were external to the Israelite if he was not born again. Law brings death because, as Paul wrote to the Romans, the law exposes sin and sin is what kills. “**For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me**” (Rom. 7:11).

Sin is what worked death in Paul, the commandments merely exposed it. Therefore the law shows us to be sinners and brings us to Christ as savior, being justified by faith (Gal. 3:24). Dear friend, if there were no law, we could never sin for “**sin is the transgression of the law,**” or more accurately, “**sin is lawlessness**” (I Jn. 3:4). John says “**If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us**” (I Jn. 1:8). The New Covenant is also a covenant of law. The difference between the Old and the New is that instead of the New Covenant written externally to the heart, the laws of the New Covenant are written internally upon the heart and upon the mind as the scripture

says: “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, sayeth the Lord; I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying ‘know the Lord:’ for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest” (Heb. 8:10-11; Jer. 31:31-34). They are written “with the Spirit of the living God” (II Cor. 3:3).

Under the Old Covenant one did not have to be born again to enjoy many covenant promises. However, David in Psalm 51 is a good example of one who was born again of God’s Spirit. The Old Covenant of law only proves man can not and will not completely obey God in his unregenerate state. Those individuals that gave their hearts to God realized this and came to God by faith and received salvation by faith and were born of God’s Spirit.

Paul uses Abraham who was justified before the law was given and David who obtained righteousness under the law as examples of the fact that justification by grace through faith has always been Gods only basis of salvation (Rom. 4:1 - 5:2). The Old Covenant was a covenant of laws for the total government of a whole nation of people, unregenerated and regenerated people, which included civil, health, and religious laws. These are very significant for us or for any society today. The New Covenant is primarily a covenant of laws concerning spiritual principles and application and is for the regenerated only.

Again, the New Covenant is only for those who are born again. That is how we enter it, through the new birth. At that time we receive a new heart upon which God begins to write His laws in detail as we study and learn more about Him and His love. Therefore, the relationship Christ has with his church is one based upon the New Covenant, a covenant of law, a covenant of love, a covenant of the laws of love. All of the laws of Christ are summed up in love to God and love to man.

Let us end this teaching by considering and understanding a number of ways how this tradition of the women’s headcovering shows love.

Jesus said, “He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him” (Jn. 14:21).

1. Obedience is love for it is written: “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments.

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous” (I Jn. 5:2-3).

2. Obedience is not only love to God but as the above scripture reveals we are only then truly loving our brethren. The fulfillment of the commandments also, of course, expresses love to all mankind.

You see, beloved, when you love God you want to do His will and you search the scriptures daily for His way. David said, **“I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart”** (Psa. 40:8). Our hearts are the same place that Gods laws are to be today for the New Covenant is one in which God said, **“I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them”** (Heb. 10:16; 8:10).

Paul wrote, **“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is a gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them”** (Eph. 2:8-10). Good works are nothing more than keeping or the fulfillment of Gods laws. And **“faith without works is dead”** (Jam. 2:26).

Jesus kept the laws of God completely and totally. He never sinned. If our life is to be the life of our Lord Jesus reproduced in us, what will our life be in relation to the holy laws of God? Jesus loved God supremely. How shall we show our love to God?

3. This tradition is to help us see God’s divine order and therefore to live it. When we don’t, the Spirit is grieved, Christians are not as fruitful as they should be, and the church is not accomplishing her role in redemption as she should be to a lost and dying world. Love wants people in harmony with God and man. Love is selfless. Loves gives. Love believes God. Love trusts. When a man and woman are in divine order, the home becomes in order, more fruitful lives are the result and a more fruitful marriage. When more homes are in divine order we have a more fruitful corporate life or church life fulfilling God’s purposes.
4. We will receive more ministry from the other created spiritual beings, angels, and, therefore, benefiting ourselves spiritually we are better able and prepared to help others which is real love.
5. We will truly love the lost of this world by demonstrating to them a cause of one of the biggest problems in society; that is, broken homes due to the lack

of acknowledging God and consequently His purposes and plans for the husband and wife. It demonstrates that God made man and woman entirely different, each with their own specific areas of ministry. This is a beginning step in changing the situation and can be shown in this very simple, non-offensive, and loving way of the woman's headcovering. This is not totally but almost entirely contradictory to parts of the "Women's Liberation Movements" which actually bring women ultimately into a bondage they are seeking to escape from. There is only one way to escape bondage and that is through the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, **"If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"** (Jn. 8:31-32 NAS). When those present then stated they were already free, Jesus said, **"Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. And the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed"** (Jn. 8:34-36 NAS). This is true freedom. We are free moral agents only in the sense that we are free to choose whom we shall serve and be slaves of. When someone might quote Paul's statement that we **"are not under law, but under grace"** out of context, we need to realize that Paul immediately asked the question, **"Shall we then sin?"** And then answered by saying we are either slaves **"of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness"** (Rom. 6:14-16). The apostles repeatedly called themselves slaves (Greek: *doulos*, bondman; KJV servants) of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:1; Jam. 1:1; II Pet. 1:1; Rev. 1:1). Therefore our freedom is to choose life or death. True freedom is to choose to live obediently. Therefore, **"let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with respect [Greek: *aidous*] and reverence [Greek: *eulabeias*]; for our God is a consuming fire"** (Heb. 12:28-29). Let us **"walk in the fear of the Lord"** (Acts 9:31). Without the true fear of God, one cannot even begin to receive true wisdom and knowledge (Pro. 1:7, 9:10).

Now then, having considered a number of ways that this beautiful and godly Christian tradition shows love, let me say a word of exhortation to those who follow the Lord Jesus through the cross and into the realities that this practice brings that we also must love those who rebel against this or have not yet seen the light of His Word. Let us not strive or be argumentative or judgmental but in patience and meekness instruct those that oppose us and the truth of God (II Tim. 2:24-26). Let us love them with all humility, realizing that this practice is not a test of fellowship or of the validity of a prophetic utterance or prayer and that, therefore, we must never initiate a break in relationship with others over this doctrine. Doctrines do not separate relationships, people do! Others, the carnal and immature, the rebellious and self-willed, those who refuse to pay the price which all truth costs, will do this.

They will shun you, reject you, scoff at you, and scorn the truth of God, but let us patiently endure and pray until they are brought to the obedience of “**the faith which was once delivered unto the saints**” (Rom 1:5; Jude :3). Let us be bound by the Lord Jesus with His cords of love and peace, continuing to look unto Him, the author and finisher of our faith, for strength, confirmation, and rest in His truth and love (Eph. 4:3; Col. 3:14; Heb. 12:2).

One might ask what they should do if a husband or pastor rejects this truth of God and forbids a woman to follow biblical teaching. I believe that a woman should be in subjection to her husband, and to those over her in the Lord, but that she must also be supremely in subjection to the Lord Himself. When there is a conflict concerning clear biblical instruction we should be obedient to God rather than men. After all, who would lie, cheat, steal, or commit immorality if a husband or a religious leader should request it? Some have done this and have not only lost their lives but their souls as well. But I believe a woman should obey God and walk with Him according to the light that she has received.

In the church, one can ask a pastor which he prefers. Will he accept the woman graciously who chooses to obey this Christian custom, not scorning or rejecting her and the ministries of God through her, not charging her with rebellion against himself (disregarding that it is really he that is rebelling against the Lord); or does he prefer that she go elsewhere for fellowship, worship, praise, and instruction in God? The local church biblically is every believer in one’s locale, and one needs only to seek out those who wish to walk in all the counsel of God and to please Him in everything. Let responsibility for any break in fellowship be upon the one who chooses to disobey God’s Word, whether it be a husband, leader, or the woman who does not want to practice this biblical tradition. God’s judgment upon His people is sure and we must leave the chastening in His hands (Heb. 10:30; 11:5-11). Let us pursue love and peace and obedience to all, both God and man. Let us be loving and submissive in attitude, word, and deed.

In the case that a husband receives the light concerning this doctrine and the wife doesn’t, he must be patient with her, giving her good biblical teaching, and clear instruction as her head concerning what the Lord requires, and then trust God that He will bring her into the light. If he loves her as Christ loves the church, I believe that she will eventually respond (Eph. 5:22-33). An obedient, submissive, and humble wife, one who is walking close to the Lord, intent on doing His will, will quickly respond.

In contrast to love, let us remind ourselves again that “**sin is the transgression of the law,**” or literally the translation should be, “**sin is**

lawlessness” (I Jn. 3:4). Because the Old Covenant has been fulfilled in Christ and we do not keep all the ordinances that were given under its authority, many people are being seduced into believing that we are delivered from all principles of law and even some go so far as to include God’s eternal moral laws. The antichrist is called “**the lawless one**” (Greek: *anomos*, without law; KJV: translated “wicked,” II Thes. 2:8). But Jesus said, “**Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break [the first thing we do] one of these least commandments, and shall teach [this is second thing we do] men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do [first] and teach [second] them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven”** (Mt. 5:17-20).

In summation then, let us say that the woman’s headcovering or veiling is an outer expression of an inner reality. It is a physical sign upon our bodies of an inner grace within our spirits and souls. By the headcovering the woman expresses her subjection to the man. She exhorts others that she is under direct headship to the man in that she has something between herself and Christ in worship and ministry. Also, before the holy ministering angels she indicates she has someone between herself and Christ regarding authority. The man, being directly responsible to Christ, therefore has nothing upon his head.

By obedience, the woman truly is in a position of authority that she otherwise is not in. She is acknowledging her place in God’s order and she will be most unlikely to use her gifts to step out of it and into a realm into which she opens herself to satanic deceptions of many kinds. We can only be given effective authority when we ourselves are subject to the authority God has placed over us. Therefore a woman’s submission to man’s headship brings her effective authority with God.

Also, we might add in closing that from the beginning of church history through the centuries into our generation this has been the custom of Christian women. Only in recent years has this custom fallen into disuse, disrepute, and disrespect; has there been such a rise of rebellion and ungodliness in the church, and such an increasing lack of concern for God’s Holy Word and His divine order.

On the other hand, the true saints are returning to this custom and are receiving the blessings of the spiritual reality it represents.

Every major sect in Christendom has allowed for the discontinuance of this custom. Even the Roman Catholic Church has ceased to require this holy practice except when entering into the presence of the pope. How much more should we require it of ourselves when entering the presence of our heavenly Father, God Almighty, Maker and Ruler of the heavens and earth!

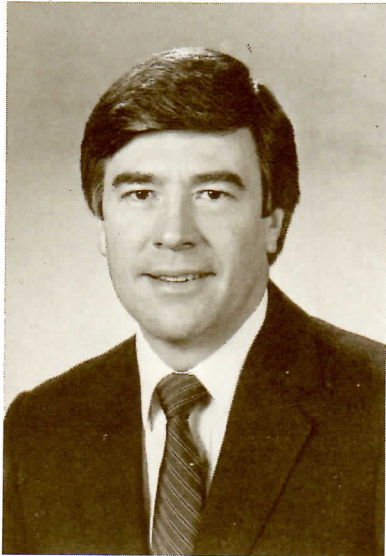
All denominations are suffering from the loss of authority to their own religious traditions, creating much confusion and heartache. Therefore, let us be used of God to reap a harvest from the confused, bewildered, rebellious, and often lost souls from within these false Churches, these Babylonian Harlots, to become humble and obedient souls in the true church, the bride of Christ.

Let us pray:

“I, therefore, as a worker together with Him, beseech you, that you receive not the grace of God in vain, but in humble obedience to His Word, giving no offences in anything, go on unto perfection, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that you walk in truth and love. Amen.”

(II Cor. 6:1, 3; Phil. 2:5, 8; Heb. 6:1; Eph. 4:13; III Jn. 3-4; Eph. 5:2)

John is the author of another work, "The Public Ministry of Women", a book which teaches primarily the biblical role of women in the assembly, as well as other foundational truths. He is also active in various local and national ministries promoting unity, revival, and restoration in the Body of Christ and working to preserve our American Christian heritage and regain religious freedom.



About The Author

A native of Fremont, Ohio, John Philip Rothacker graduated from the College of Dentistry at Ohio State University. After completing an internship in pedodontics at Children's Hospital a year later, he was dramatically converted.

He then practiced dentistry for two years, dividing his time between private practice and working with mentally retarded children at Columbus State School. In 1966 John left to do missionary dentistry for three

months in the summer program of Project Compassion in the West Indies. Following this project, while traveling and working with other missionaries, John entered into the gifts of the Holy Spirit and experienced the power of God in many exciting and miraculous ways.

Then in 1967 he was ordained "by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." (I Tim. 4:14) Although continuing his public speaking he began his many years of home ministry. (Acts 20:20)

In 1976 the Lord Jesus led John out of eight years of part-time dental practice and into a radio ministry where he is "on call" five nights a week teaching and discussing the scriptures over the air. (Acts 19:9) By means of the "Truth for Today" program, John is reaching out through the media of radio and tapes to "plant the church" in Christ, in His holiness, faith, and righteousness, always endeavoring to speak the truth in love.

Having been called to be celibate for many years, the Lord has now given him a helpmate to minister with him. God is healing both naturally and supernaturally as John teaches biblical nutrition and his wife, Dulce, is given manifestations of the Holy Spirit such as the "word of knowledge" and "healing". (Ex. 15:26; I Cor. 12:7-9)

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