

# 1 Corinthians 11 (Part 1): 1-16 • God's Order for Marriage

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1 Corinthians chapter 11: We're going to cover the first 16 verses of 1 Corinthians. Let's read those verses together. I'm going to read him, you follow along, and then we'll open in prayer. Paul writes:

*“<sup>1</sup> Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.*

*<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. <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.” (ESV)*

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, open our hearts to the ministry of Your Word this morning, and teach us, Lord, teach us what is important. Teach us what are the things that

You want us to lay hold of today, guide us and direct us in the things that You're saying through the Scriptures.

Lord, we know how long ago these things were written, but we're reading them in 2016, and we need to make appropriation of the Word to our day and our current circumstances. And we ask that You would help us to do that.

And we ask that You would guide us in that entire situation. In Jesus' precious name, we pray, amen.

Keep in mind, as we go through this section of Scripture and frankly, all the 1 Corinthians, that 1 Corinthians is a problem-solving letter. You'll remember that the Corinthians had written to Paul about various things that were going on in the church. And so, he wrote them this letter answering those things. Now, in this particular case, he is dealing with an issue that came up in the fellowship, whether or not it was appropriate in the church for a woman to take part in the service with her head uncovered.

Now, as you're all well aware, there are groups in Christendom who read these verses, look at them, and say very quickly, yes, women need to have their heads covered, and that's that. And we respect them for their position, but that's the end of the discussion as it relates to that. But what that does is that creates a problem with the rest of Christendom, because if in fact women are being told here to have their heads covered in our day and age today, then I guess it's very possible that the majority of women today are being disobedient as it relates to this particular element of God's Word.

And, we would hope that somebody has looked at these verses and thought this thing through, you know what I mean? It's like, gee, I hope we aren't just glossing over these things for the sake of convenience or for the sake of, uh, simply just tossing something out to say, well, that's not relevant because that's the, that, that was then and this is now, and it's too easy to do that. We need to look at this situation and we need to give it some consideration because frankly, a casual reading of these verses pretty much makes it sound like women need to have their heads covered. And so, that's what we need to look at.

I remember as a kid, the first time I was introduced to this idea of head coverings for women, at least as it related to church. I was in grade school, and there was a family that lived right next door to us. A girl in that family was in my grade, and I saw them coming home from church one day. They were Roman Catholic, and the little girl and her mom had these things on their heads.

It looked like a little lace doily, like something we'd put under a potted plant or something in our house. But not to make fun of it, that's what it looked like.

And I wondered for a minute what in the world they were doing, but then I realized, oh, they just came from church. I chalked it up to some sort of a religious something or other, and just forgot about it because in the church that I attended, although women wore hats, they didn't all wear hats. We're talking back in the sixties, you guys. More women wore hats back then than they do today; it was much more common. But they did it for style, not for any sort of religious undertones or reasons or that sort of thing. So, that was my introduction to the whole thing.

So, as we look closer at this question, we find a couple of things that stand out about this passage and what was going on at the time that Paul was writing this letter. I'm going to put these notes up on the screen just so you can stay tuned into my line of thinking related to this.

1. All respectable women wore head coverings in Paul's day
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The first thing we're going to take note of is the fact that back in Paul's day, all respectable women wore head coverings, and not just in any religious setting.

They wore them all the time, and that was what a respectable woman did. Now you might be interested to find out about the unrespectable, non-respectable women, and those were basically prostitutes, okay. Let me just be clear about it. They did not wear head coverings. And so it was pretty easy in that society to see who the respectable women were, and those who thumbed their nose at the conventions of society and propriety by refusing to do that sort of thing.

Now, again, in the culture in which Paul is speaking, this was a common thing; this happened all the time, and it was disgraceful. It was considered disgraceful for a woman to be in public, and certainly, as it related to what happened in the church, for her not to have her head covered.

Look again at verse 6 with me in your Bible. It says, “*For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short.*” That was disgraceful too, for a woman to have short hair. He goes on to say, “.... (For) *since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or even shave her head* (he says), *let her cover her head.*” This is the thing that Paul's speaking into this, that in that, in the culture in which he's writing these words, it was a disgrace for a woman to be in public without her head covered. Now we'll talk about why, in just a little bit.

What we first need to ask is, what were the prostitutes saying? What were those brazen women who went without head coverings saying by keeping their head uncovered, by refusing to have their head covered, or by having short hair, or even their heads shaven, or something like that? Well, we're told, and this is really the second thing that we're going to see here in this passage.

1. All respectable women wore head coverings in Paul's day
2. Verse 10 is the key in this passage:

**1 Corinthians 11:10**

*...a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head...*

And we're told in verse 10, which is a key to understanding the entire passage, and I'll go ahead and put it on the screen here, just so we can read it together: "*...a wife (Paul writes), ought to have a symbol of authority on her head...*" Alright?

Now I want you to think about that: "*...a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head...*" What that means is, the prostitutes of that day who refused to wear a head covering was essentially because they were rejecting the cultural symbol of authority in Paul's day, which was a head covering that a woman maintained whenever she was in public. All right. That's why it was disgraceful for a woman to go without it because she was rejecting the authority that had been established in her life.

Now, if you have some concerns about this, stay with me because we're going to, we're going to uncover, unpack a lot of these things.

1. All respectable women wore head coverings in Paul's day
1. Verse 10 is the key in this passage:

**1 Corinthians 11:10**

*... a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head...*

This phrase, that is in 1 Corinthians 11:10, "*a symbol of authority on her head,*" is the key phrase for you and I to understand why women are no longer compelled or required to wear a head covering today. It's very simple, and the fact is that it no longer conveys a symbol of authority. In other words, if someone were to see a woman walking down the road, down the street, whatever, today or in a store with a head covering, they're not going to look at

her and say, wow, there is a woman under authority. It doesn't say that. It doesn't convey that sort of an idea.

Today, again, in our culture, in our society, when women wear something on their head, it's either for medical reasons, for just dressing up, or whatever the thing. It does not convey to the culture in which we live that this woman is under authority. It just doesn't mean it.

And, frankly, there is a great potential for those groups which insist that a woman wear a head covering for them to be basically following a tradition that no longer makes a statement, right? It made a very clear statement in Paul's culture. It doesn't make a statement in our culture. And so, a head covering in a woman, although it means something very much to her and perhaps even within the group of which she is a member, outside of that group, it does not signify that.

The point is, if a woman wants to wear a head covering, that's because it symbolizes to her that symbol of authority in her life. Great! There's nothing; we don't have a problem with that. But again, the reason that all of Christendom, or at least Christendom in the United States and other countries that don't have this symbol, don't do it is because it no longer means that from a cultural standpoint. It is no longer that sort of a thing.

Here's what we, here's what you and I need to do rather than taking these verses and just say, oh, well, that's no longer culturally relevant. Oh, yes, it is. It is incredibly culturally relevant because there is a meaning behind the head covering. This is the thing that is a problem with holding to traditions and holding to legalistic requirements is that we often forget there's a meaning because we just start doing what we're told to do and we don't even think any more about what we do.

And that's possible with anything, including a head covering. A woman could wear a head covering and no longer even really think about why she's wearing it necessarily or whatever. It just becomes something that you do. It's like, hey, you wear this head covering. Why? Because it's what you do.

What Paul is really getting at in this passage is what is behind the head covering. So, if you're taking notes, this is the headline; we'll put this up here.

God designed ORDER within marriage

It's basically all about the fact that God designed ORDER within marriage; that's it.

That's what the head covering is about. God designed order within the context of marriage, and the head covering was a symbol in Paul's day of respect for that order. Again, if a woman wears a head covering today in the general populace, it does not convey respect for the order that is fashioned within marriage.

Now, there are two primary questions that we're going to deal with in the verses of this passage, and again, I want to put these on the screen for you so you can see them.

What is the "order of marriage?"

Why do women need to show respect for it?

First of all, what is the order of marriage?

I just basically told you that the head covering was meant to convey an idea that God created order in the institution of marriage. Well, what is that order?

What is the "order of marriage?"

Why do women need to show respect for it?

And then secondly, we're going to deal with the question: Why do women need to show respect for that order? All right.

Those are the questions we're going to deal with. We'll deal with the first question about the order of marriage and what it is.

Paul explains it, look with me in your Bible in verse 3. He writes: *"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."*

Now, Paul made a very similar statement to the Ephesian believers. But what he's saying here is that within God's kingdom—and people, listen to me—within the context of marriage, God has established an order of leadership, an order. And to the man, he calls that individual the head within the context of that order of marriage. The man is the head, and so, that's simply what God created.

Don't ask me why he picked the man. I don't think we make the best leaders. In fact, I think women make fantastic leaders; so it's not because they're not able to lead. Why God picked us men? Sometimes I wish He didn't. I wish we could just abdicate that particular responsibility, but that's just the way it is.

Whenever there is an authority, listen to me; whenever there is an authority, there must be those who are in subjection to that authority or subordinate, if you will, to that authority. And if those words offend you, please understand, that's the way it is in every civilized society. We understand this.

When we see a police officer patrolling a city or an area in the state or the sheriff at, when we see those kinds of symbols on the, on their vehicle or on their clothing, we understand that is a symbol of authority. And we understand that there is an expectation within a civilized society where order is expected, that we need to be in subjection to that authority, we need to be submissive to that authority, we need to be subordinate to that authority.

We get that. We understand that if you don't have that in a culture, what do you have? You have chaos, right? You have anarchy when there is no authority present, and no one is in subjection to that authority. You have chaos and anarchy. And believe me, there are countries that operate on chaos and anarchy, and you don't want to go there. They're not fun places to live or even to visit, for that matter.

We take it so for granted here in the United States of America, even though we're constantly challenging authority, and we've even been raised, us (dope-headed, hippie, yeah, people). We were raised with that whole idea of question authority, man! It's like, yeah, right, yeah. How's that working out for you? Sort of a thing.

We thought it was a sign of strength. We thought it was a sign of honor to question authority and rebel against the authority of the, the structure of this and that and stuff, and it creates anarchy. Just know this; every civilized society, you can't get away from this, has an authority structure, and those who are subordinate to that authority structure. They are key elements in every society.

You might be interested to know that within marriage, it is no different; within marriage, there is no difference. God established an authority structure within the context of the marriage union between a man and a woman, where the same key elements are observed.

In fact, we see the beginnings of it way back in creation. God created, or even talked about creating, the woman. Let me show you here from Genesis chapter 2.

**Genesis 2:18 (ESV)**

*Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”*

*Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper (The Old King James would say help mate) fit for him.”*

And the idea there is that the woman was created by God from the very beginning to be one who comes alongside as a support, as one who assists, okay. Now in Christian circles, I can say that without people getting terribly angry.

But if I haven't riled you up enough, let me give you one more word to describe this process: of this woman coming alongside, under the leadership of her husband. It's the word she is a subordinate.

a subordinate...

Now don't throw anything because we're going to do our best to understand this sort of a thing. You need to understand it. I always try to turn to definition. Let's look at the definition.

a subordinate...

**Subordinate: sub·or·di·nate**

**adjective:**

lower in rank or position

**noun:**

a person under the authority of another

The word, subordinate, is both an adjective and a noun. In its adjective form, it describes someone lower in rank or position. He is a—and then, under the noun, it is a person under the authority of another.

And I know what some of you are thinking. You're thinking, Paul, how are you going to dig your way out of this one? But I want to remind you of 3 very

important facts about subordination to authority, and I've already mentioned one. This just comes by way of a reminder.

It is one of the pillars of every ordered society. There is no civilized ordered society where the idea of authority and subordination doesn't exist, unless you have a chaotic sort of environment. But I want you to know something else very important about it: it's God's design for the wife within marriage. By the way, we're not talking about women to men in a general sense. God does not ask women to subordinate themselves to men. We're talking within the context of marriage, okay? Please understand.

But it's very important that you understand, both men and women understand, this is, this is God's thing. He came up with it. We didn't. I wouldn't have. Yeah, maybe I would. Yeah, on a prideful day, I would. On a more humble day, I would have said, I abdicate, because there are some days it's just, it's really a challenge to walk in that calling or that reality. But it's God's design. It's God's order. It's sort of thing

And then, ladies—this should be those of you who are married—this should be the most important element to keep in mind about the idea of subordination:

1. Reminder: It is one of the pillars of every ordered society
2. It is God's design for the wife within marriage
3. Jesus did it

Jesus did it.

I always love to tell women about that. The fact that Jesus did it. We talk a lot about how He is the example to men in marriage because we know the Bible says, husbands, love your wives. How? As Christ loved the church. He's the example, right? We say that a lot, He's the example of men, to men in marriage. Guess what? He's the example to women as well, just as He has established an order within marriage, a structure in marriage, and He asks women to subordinate themselves to the leadership structure of their husband. He is the example of that subordination because He did it himself.

Let me show you a beautiful passage that Paul wrote in the book of Philippians. And I want to read this first and then explain it. But Paul writes:

**Philippians 2:5-8 (ESV)**

*Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

*Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

Now, I understand; I get it. This passage was not written specifically for women. It's written to all of us, and we're all to have that attitude. However, I bring this up in the context of talking about the role of women within marriage, because this is such a beautiful passage, explaining the dynamics of that role. And I think it will help you to understand how Jesus modeled the subordination for a woman within the context of marriage. And what we're going to do to pull these out is to highlight some of these elements of this.

**Philippians 2:5-8 (ESV)**

*Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, **though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped**, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

*Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, **though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped**, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

Notice we highlight, first of all, this phrase: "... *though he was in the form of God...*" And what that means is, that's Paul's way of saying, though He was equal to God, though he is God in human flesh, at least in his incarnation, okay. "...*though He was in the form of God, (He) did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped...*" Grasp means held on to, unwilling to let go of.

Even though Jesus, being entirely and completely equal to God the Father, right? He did not demand that the rights and the privileges that went along with that equality. That's what this verse is saying.

Now, what's interesting about this, and why this applies to women, is because just as in the case of Jesus—where He is completely and totally, utterly equal to God the Father—so also a woman is completely, utterly, and completely equal to her husband. And here's the next statement we're going to make about that.

Subordination does NOT imply (or prove) inferiority

Subordination does not imply, and heavens, it does not prove, inferiority.

Inferiority isn't even in the conversation. Now, people would like to inject it in there. They'll say, if somebody is subordinate, they are inferior. Ah, that's ridiculous.

We know that's not the case in business sort of situations. We know it's, it's not the case when it comes to Jesus. He subordinated himself to the will of the Father. Does that mean that He was inferior to the Father? There's some people who are just really off their rocker, and they think so.

In fact, they struggle. There are people who read the Bible, and they struggle. They read the gospels, and they're like, ah, I don't get it. Jesus is constantly saying, I only do the will of the Father. I only say, but they'll hear the Father saying, I only—I'm completely and utterly in submission to the Father (John 5:30).

And they say, how could He say those things and still be God? Because He was willingly subordinating himself to the Father. It has nothing to do with inferiority. It's a choice, and that's what we go on to see in Philippians. We go back to our passage, and we see this next area that's highlighted.

**Philippians 2:5-8 (ESV)**

*Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, **but emptied himself**, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, **he humbled himself** by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

*Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, **but emptied himself**, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, **he humbled himself** by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

Notice what we've put in red, it says, "...*but he emptied himself.*" And then later on in the passage: "...*he humbled himself...*" Did you notice that? And that's a really important thing for you guys to see here. Jesus did not, was not forced into a position of subordination, right? God the Father didn't say to Him, alright, Son... There was no Sonship until the incarnation. But He didn't say to Him, set it aside, lay it aside, empty yourself and become a human being. None of that going on.

It says here very clearly, Jesus emptied himself. He poured himself out. He literally surrendered his rights and privileges. He didn't surrender his Godhood. He surrendered the rights and privileges that go along with Godhood so that he might become a human being.

But notice again: "...*he humbled himself...*" This is a very important understanding from this passage because, again, it applies to the issue of women. Listen, we don't tell women to submit to their husbands. We don't tell wives, listen, you better, you better submit. And any man who has half a brain isn't going to say it to his wife. That is not his place to demand her submission or her subjection. It's not his place.

God is the one who places this calling upon the life of the woman, not the man. He's too busy laying down his life for her to get around to say anything nearly so arrogant and stupid as, honey, you need to submit. I mean, you want your marriage to go south, just start saying that to your wife, guys.

Listen, submission and subordination by a woman is something that happens willingly on her part. It is a gift that she gives her husband. It is not demanded of her. Did you notice that God doesn't even demand it of her? He'll, he'll let you, ladies, refuse to walk in submission to your husbands. You'll notice he didn't strike you down for, he'll let you do it, you know?

And so, this is something He's asking of you. This is something that He's imploring you, yes, to do. And saying, this is the order that I have established within the context of marriage. But listen, He'll let you, He'll let you say no. He'll let you live. No, I'm not going to do that. I'm not going to live my life subordinate to this man or, or that I've married or, or whatever, I'm not going to

do that. But you know what? He will also let you experience the pain and the difficulty and the challenge that goes along whenever we thumb our nose at the calling that He's placed upon our lives. Any calling.

I mean, it's the same thing for a man: A man can say no to, I choose not to love this woman. Bible says, "*Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church...*" (Ephesians 5:25). I choose not to do it. I choose not to do it. And we come up with all kinds of excuses why we're not doing it.

I've had people, in marriage counseling situations, I was going through with one couple years ago and talking about the role of a woman to respond out of respect, to his leadership role and she was like, as if that's going to happen. I was like, what? She's, yeah, respecting isn't happening because I don't respect him. See, she missed the point.

It's the same, same point that a man misses when he reads that he has to love his wife as Christ loved the church. And he comes back and says, yeah, but there's a problem. I'm not in love with her. Oh, that's not what God said. He didn't say, husbands, love your wives if you happen to be in love with her today. He said, love your wife, make sure she knows she is loved and cherished always. You mean if I don't feel it? Yeah.

And the woman, respect and honor your husband and subordinate. Well, forget him. He's not even respectable. Doesn't say whether he's respectable or she's lovable. It says be obedient. See, it comes down to obedience in the end. And we struggle with obedience in our marriages, don't we? Do you know what we call it? We call it a marriage problem. People come to me and they'll say, we're having marriage problems. And I'm like, yeah, okay, fine.

But I know what's going on because I've been married this week; in fact, it's going to be 38 years. I've been married long enough to know that when we're having marriage problems, it's because we're being disobedient. There is a calling, there is a directive, there is an order established within the context of marriage. And when we ignore it, right? We do it to our own harm and to the harm of our marriage relationship with our spouse. You can't thumb your nose at God and just get away with it. You're going to deal with issues.

When I am dealing with people who are having marriage problems, instead of sitting and talking about their marriage ad nauseum, which you can do forever in a day, we start off doing a Bible study. Because what needs to happen in marriages where there's problems is they need to learn what God's Word says and what is expected of them as it relates to marriage. They need to learn and

understand that they are, there are roles within the context of the order that God established in a marriage relationship.

And until they understand those roles and begin to walk out those roles, we can sit and do all the counseling we want, and we're going to be spitting in the wind, right? It's not going to do any good. It's like putting gas in an engine where there's no oil in the crankcase. We can fill up the tank with gas, but the thing isn't going to run. And that's something that needs to be - we need to remember regarding these things. So, oh my.

What, so here's, here's what Paul was warning against: This is what 1 Corinthians 11, the first 16 verses are about. He's warning against an attitude of women who were refusing to submit to God's order within marriage, okay. And in his culture, that was expressed through head coverings, and everybody knew it, even the unbelievers knew it. And so he taught them about those things and related to this outward indication of the attitude of her heart because ultimately it reveals her attitude toward God.

But please understand this, ladies: you can follow the letter of what might be considered to be the law—if you do consider this the law—and you can wear a head covering. But that doesn't mean your heart is right. Outward symbols are fine as far as they go, I suppose. But listen, that doesn't change the heart; that doesn't change there. A woman can be wearing a head covering and not be respecting the established order of authority that God has created within the family unit.

So, you see that that symbol is only a symbol so far as it goes, and so far as it is embraced in the heart. What is really going on is a woman's real attitude toward God. Because you see, ladies, again, I want to remind you, your husband didn't choose to be the head in the marriage, a thing. And most of us feel like we're not very good at it. But I want to show you here what Paul says anyway, regardless of how we feel about our role as men. Regardless of how a woman feels about our role as this position of head. I want to show you what Paul says in Ephesians chapter 5.

**Ephesians 5:22-24 (ESV)**

*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.*

He says, “*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. (And then he—he says why?) For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.*”

What's Paul doing in these verses is simply reiterating the order of marriage, right? That's all. He's just laying it out. He's saying, there's an order within the context of marriage. Here it is; it's basically wives submit to your husbands because your husband's the head in that marriage relationship. Submit as you would submit to the Lord. And this is the interesting thing, and I'll talk about that in a moment.

**Ephesians 5:33 (ESV)**

*However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

But he goes on to end the chapter by saying this, “*However, let each one of you love his wife as himself (that's a word to the man, the husband), and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*”

Now that's an interesting word, that word respect. And I hope that all of you ladies who are married, and even those of you who are working toward that goal, are laying a hold of that word because that is a keyword in that passage, that's a double directive for women there.

First of all, a woman should see that she respects her husband, because ladies, that's his number one need. That's how God wired him—for respect. A man needs respect more than even love. Now, that might blow your mind, but when the Bible tells husbands and wives what to give to one another, it says to the man, husbands, love your wives, but to the woman, it says, respect your husband.

And then, we've talked about this before. I don't have time to get into a lot of it, but you guys know that a man is occupational by nature. And what he does, and who he is, is everything to him in the sense of his identity and so forth. And when a woman respects a man, there is a great work that goes on between the bond between the two of them, but there's more to it than just that. You see, when a woman respects her husband, she's not just respecting him, she's respecting The One who ordained him and called him to his role within the marriage.

You see, and that's why Paul said earlier there in Ephesians: "*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord...*" Because when a woman submits to her husband, when a woman responds to the structure of order that God has established in marriage, she's not just responding to her husband; she's responding to The One who gave him that position.

And so you see, what Paul was getting at, as it relates to head coverings in his culture, was: listen, when you thumb your nose at God's established order and you disrespect what God has established—meaning your husband as the head of the home—you're disrespecting God. And that's what it comes down to. And that's the point of what he wanted to say. This is a disgraceful thing: to disrespect God. God has established an order, and when a woman respects her husband and his calling, she is likewise respecting the Lord who bestowed that calling.

Oh, listen! There's so much more we could say on this subject. But suffice it to say that, I mean, you all know our culture has foolishly taken a stand against the Word of God and thrown these ideas completely aside. And they're reaping what they've sown. Marriages today are, well, let's face it, they're a train wreck. Marriages are a train wreck because we've ignored the guidelines and the wisdom of God's Word related to how marriage was established and even who created it.

And within that context, both the husband and the wife have a privilege. People, it is, don't think of it as a duty. It's a privilege to walk within the role that God has established for you in marriage. It is a privilege. And Jesus is our example in both of those respects. Men, love your wives; Jesus is your example. Lay down your life. Be willing to lay down your life for her. Make sure she knows she is cherished above all others in this life. Jesus is your example. Do what he did; be willing to lay down your life for her.

Women, respect and honor your husbands and the position that God has placed him in. Jesus is your example as well. He is the one who subordinated himself to the Father, and His attitude of submission is a beautiful thing. He considered it a privilege to follow God's order in that sense, and to model those things for us.

So marriage, if we're willing to look at it, and really understand it from a biblical perspective, we realize it doesn't have all of the connotations: those nasty connotations that the world tries to inject into the biblical model of marriage. Yeah, the Bible wants women to just be, to never open their mouth, and they're just supposed to shut up, and just be like the dog, just staying at his

side, ready to go play fetch if that's what he wants to do, sort of a thing. And it's just, it's a very demeaning sort of a picture of the role of women. And it demeans not only women, it demeans Christ, who is the model for her.

If we'll simply try to understand what these things mean, and if men will, will throw off the ridiculous notions that the world has put on them that somehow, your wife is here to serve you, sort of a thing. And we'll start to really cherish these women.

I mean, I got to be honest with you. I fall down on the job regularly, okay. And I got 38 years of witness to that in the person of my wife. I've made lots of mistakes when it comes to fulfilling my role to love her as she deserves to be loved, and as God has called me to love her. But as I think it was James Dobson said, and I like this, a good marriage is made up of two people who know how to forgive as we mess up in our roles all the time. But the more we strive toward them, the more we seek to fulfill them and honor them, the more God is going to bless our marriage relationships. They become a thing of beauty when we're not looking over the other person's shoulder to see if they're toe on the line, but if we're living our own life before God in obedience to His Word.