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# ***Because of the Angels!***

A study on family life by

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*text*

1 Corinthians 11:10 – *"A woman ought to have a veil on her head, because of the angels."*

*Introduction*

(1) The young wife was pleased when her husband called her an angel. He said, "You're always up in the air. You've never got any clothes. And you're always harping on!"

(2) He was wrong, of course, for no woman, nor any man, has ever been an angel nor ever will be.

- Angels are a race of beings quite distinct and separate from the human race; but they are nonetheless deeply involved in the life of the church (as our text shows).

(3) From this we might learn that there is nothing so sad, nor so ludicrous, as a church that has lost its awareness of the supernatural and of the spiritual dimension.

- Paul declares that we live, work, and worship in the presence of angels, who are ever present in the church, always observing our actions and attitudes!
- Therefore we should be ....

## (A) SEPARATE FROM THE WORLD IN LIFESTYLE

See vs. 4-6, 13-16, “Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonours his head, but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head ... Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory?” (ESV)

(1) There is something strange about Paul's argument here. It certainly did not reflect common practice, either in the synagogue or in the world –

- in the Greek culture, both sexes usually worshipped uncovered
- among the Jews, both sexes worshipped with their heads covered
- among male philosophers long hair was common, and was not thought shameful in any way.

(2) So what was Paul trying to say?

- He seems to have been reaching for a distinctly Christian lifestyle.

(3) This is surely the real issue, not the length of a person's hair, or whether or not a hat is worn at church.

- Paul wanted every Christian to be clearly marked in society.
- There should be no confusion between us and the world.
- We should be marked as God's "peculiar" people by an extraordinary quality of love and faithfulness, one that even the angels will recognise as born of heaven.

## (B) SEPARATE FROM THE WORLD IN RELATIONSHIPS

(1) Where do you look for the pattern upon which to base your relationships with others, whether at home, at work, or in the church?

(2) Paul has two great goals –

(a) To put the family into God's order; that is, to make it a family the angels will observe with delight (vs. 3, 7-9) ....

(b) To give equal honour to both spouses (vs. 11-12) ....

*Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.*

(3) But on the issue of equality, notice how Paul places both sexes under "authority" –

**(a) THE WOMAN IS UNDER AUTHORITY**

See vs. 3, “*The head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.*”

**(i)** They are partners together, but where necessary she should yield leadership to her husband in the home, supporting him, encouraging his priestly and pastoral role in the family, promoting his goals.

- She should do this even when he is undeserving.

**(ii)** A time may come when a man who is altogether derelict in his duty, who has abandoned the true role of husband and father, must himself be abandoned (cp. 1 Co 7:15)

- But don't give up too soon! Some women are more patient with the weeds in their garden than they are with their husbands!

**(b) THE MAN IS UNDER AUTHORITY**

**(i)** See vs. 10. Here we meet a startling ambiguity, for the verse can be translated, “*Because of the angels, the woman should have the sign of her authority upon her head*”

**(ii)** That is, her veil, or head-covering, marks her, not as one who is under authority, but as one who possesses authority!

- Her veil is to her like his helmet is to a policeman.
- See Mt 7:29; 8:9; 9:6; etc, where the same phrase occurs, and must be translated as “*one who possesses authority*”.

**(iii)** That is to say, while the man should give headship in the home, he must not do so as a bully, tyrant, or lord over his wife, but as one whom she too may rightly command to be her true spouse and companion.

**(iv)** Christ should be his example, who gained the right to be Head over his Bride, the church, not through tyranny, but by his unwavering love and his willingness to die for her.

- Now he protects and enables the church, which same duty a godly husband should fulfil toward his wife.

**(v)** But what if she is –

- ***Insolent?*** She is the “weaker vessel” and you the stronger, so that you might bear with her and nurture her.
- ***Foolish?*** If she is inept now, she must have been the same when you married her; so pray for her, teach her, and be patient.
- ***Rebellious?*** Then stop trying to command her, and use tender persuasion instead!

**(4)** And what is true of the man toward the woman is equally true in reverse!

## (C) SEPARATE FROM THE WORLD IN ATTITUDES

(1) Paul wrote, “*We ask God to strengthen you by his glorious might with all the power you need to patiently endure everything with joy.*” (Col 1:11, GW)

(2) To hear some preachers you would suppose that Paul had actually written – “*We ask him to strengthen you by his glorious might with all the power you need to master every problem, destroy every foe, fulfil every desire, triumphantly cast aside every difficulty, and bend the earth to your will!*”

(3) But there is no room in that equation for humility, suffering, sacrifice, no room to walk truly in the footsteps of Jesus.

(4) Jesus pointed to a child, as an example of how we should live (Mt 18:3-5) ....

*I promise you this. Unless you turn around and become like this little child, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven. But if you make yourself humble like this child, you will be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

(5) Until modern times, the life of a child was cheap.

- They were deemed weak and helpless, lacking status, standing little higher than a beggar or a slave.

(6) That is what Jesus meant by “*humble like a little child*” – lowly, not arrogant, vulnerable, and reckoning ourselves to be in debt to all.

## CONCLUSION

Rid yourself of the idea that life should be fair, and that you are entitled to a beautiful, happy home.

Why do you suppose the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment warns against coveting your neighbour's wife, goods, land, and the like, if not because life's rewards are often unevenly distributed?

We are called to live in a higher dimension.

You can know the sweetest happiness; but it is found in obedience to Christ, not in material things.

We live in the presence of angels; so let us walk meekly, gently, lovingly, faithfully, as people who worship Christ and hope to inherit the kingdom of God.