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Bible Standards

Radical, Biblical, Apostolic, Christianity



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BIBLE STANDARDS

“BECAUSE WE ARE HIS” - BASIC BIBLE HOLINESS SERIES

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PART I: SEPARATION CONCEPTS

Whenever we look to the subject of practical Holiness of dress, the constant questions are:

WHY BOTHER? WHO CARES ANYWAY? The answer, as always, for the “Church” is God’s book....

1 Cor. 6:19 *“What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your Spirit, which are God’s.”*

Notice God asks a key question....ARE YOU HIS OR NOT? We have been bought by Calvary’s blood.

THEREFORE....glorify Him in BOTH Spirit & body! After the New Birth, we become God’s property.

THE GREATEST HURDLE TO GROWTH = the Issue of Personal Sovereignty. Notice what else Paul said:

1 Cor. 7:22 *“For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman: likewise also, he that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant. 23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.”*

The Scriptures are not written by accident!

2 Peter 1:20 *“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”*

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Heb. 12:14 *“Follow peace with all men, and Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the Grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby, many be defiled;”*

Verse 15 goes with 14 because of the definition of Holiness.

HOLINESS = *state of being holy* HOLY = *Spiritual purity.*

This tells us God wants us to be Spiritually pure and that we are to FOLLOW after peace & Holiness.

FOLLOW = “to ensue, to press forward”

GOD HAS INDEED CALLED US TO HOLINESS: Both inner & outer....Each one can destroy the other!!!

1 Peter 1:15 *“But as He, which hath called you is Holy, so be ye Holy in all manner of conversation;*

16 *Because it is written, Be ye Holy; for I am Holy.”*

(as you can see, Holiness is not optional, so we must explore)

To be like Jesus, is our goal....ONLY HE CAN MAKE IT SO!

***Holiness is not outward dogma ***it is conforming to God’s character....

The N.T. talks of being (transformed) & (conformed)

TRANSFORMED = is the process / CONFORMED = is the result.

On your Spiritual journey, sooner or later, God will bring you down this path.

The word, HOLY occurs 600 times. (in Leviticus it's the very theme of the book) In a Nutshell: Holiness is being separated to God....and having our conduct befitting those who are separated. (WE'RE HEIRS!)

1 Thes. 4:1 *“Furthermore then, we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.”*

(READ ON THROUGH VERSE 9)

THAT ONE CONCEPT SUMS IT ALL UP! -- > Because We Are His, we try to please Him. I WANT to please Him because I LOVE Him! ARE YOU MORE INTERESTED IN PLEASING SELF THAN GOD?

1 Thes. 5:22 *“Abstain from all appearance of evil. 23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole Spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”*

We can change our conduct....but, only God, can change our heart!

OUTER HOLINESS WITHOUT INNER HOLINESS = SELF RIGHTEOUSNESS!
which is “filthy rags” ---- (filthy rags are useless). BUT REMEMBER: “BALANCE” IS WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR! (don't throw the baby out with the bath water!) There is no in between, we belong, either to God or to Satan!

2 Cor. 6:14 *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 17 Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,”*

Romans 12:1 *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, Holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”*

Side note here....

Presenting your bodies is not an issue of body building or being involved in every health fad. Surely, God does not get glory out of us being unhealthy. But, that's the point, He does not really get glory out of our health, per say, either. There will always be people that are “fat, skinny, smart, simple, rich, poor, sick, well, short & tall” in the world, as well as the Church. These are not distinguishing factors.

1 Tim. 4:8 *“For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. 9 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation.”*

This verse is not condemning health clubs and being in shape, but it does place a Biblical perspective on it. Our flesh is going back to dust, but our soul is going to live forever! The current fad in religion today with “aerobics” in the fellowship hall and “Christian weight lifters” is probably not hurting anything, but surely borders on being “silly” at best, as far as gaining God's favor goes. What God does get Glory from, is our separation from the world! We cannot distinguish ourselves with our health, but we can distinguish ourselves, by our attitude and our outer attire.

When we come to God, we think this Holiness stuff is “stupid.” Of course, many thought Acts 2 :38, was too! DON'T BE SO QUICK TO JUDGE THINGS BEFORE YOU HAVE SINCERELY SOUGHT GOD. REMEMBER, GOD IS OUR LAW GIVER: (obedience is required of us). IF IT PLEASES GOD, IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO IT DISPLEASES! And vice-versa.

Even though we wrestle with our flesh, God has given us a mind & heart to cooperate with His Spirit. WE SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO MAKE OBEDIENT CHOICES!

Phil. 2:12 *“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in My absence, work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure. 14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings: 15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the Sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom, ye shine as lights in the world;”*

KEYS:

- #1. Be consistently obedient.
- #2. Work out your salvation (*WITH “Fear & Trembling” (sincerity) this is a short coming in our modern Christian culture*).
- #3. Obey His Word, without complaining.
- #4. Because we will shine like lights to this world.

---- > Reasonable standards bring Glory to God, by distinguishing His people in the earth.

WHAT IS A STANDARD? = a banner or flag that identifies you; it represents your nation's customs, philosophies & lifestyles.

*** IN BATTLE = it distinguishes the sides *** Our Church standards represent our VALUES & CONVICTIONS to our city.

WHY BOTHER WITH STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE?

1. Matthew 5:14 *“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.”*

2. Every significant group has a uniform: IBM, Act Media, the Military, even McDonald’s, WHY NOT THE CHURCH? (it always amazes me how some will wear the most ridiculous and absurd costumes and uniforms in the name of a career or even just a minimum wage job, yet stumble at the idea of the Church having a dress code? I think we should consider the signals we send God sometimes).

3. GREATEST OF ALL: When we build a house, the codes seem silly, overkill to normal conditions. But when Hurricane Hugo came through, the USA did not sustain near the damage the Caribbean did. Why? BUILDING CODES! (standards) WE ARE ESTABLISHING A CHURCH THAT WILL SUSTAIN STORMS!

4. Reasonable standards help protect our Spirituality. It is not bondage if it is done right! But in reality, it’s freedom!

Proverbs 27:12 *“A prudent [man] foreseeeth the evil, [and] hideth himself; [but] the simple pass on, [and] are punished.”*

THE CONCEPT IS THIS....

I won’t be lost by drinking a beer, but I could be for drunkenness. So, we set some values to live by, such as, I choose not to drink at all. Sometimes it is good to draw your line, BEFORE the danger zone....

WHERE DO STANDARDS COME FROM?

3 BASIC TYPES OF CONVICTIONS:

- * 1. BIBLICAL
- * 2. CHURCH
- * 3. PERSONAL

Concerning the Church: does a Church have authority to set local standards? Consider the fact that the Holy Ghost spoke to our brethren about tobacco long before the AMA discovered its health threat.

Acts 15:28 "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; 29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well."

Let's look to an O.T. story of interest: JEREMIAH 35:1-18, The Rechabites did things that seemed unnecessary & foolish to those around....BUT GOD BLESSED THEM! And used them as an example! The next time you think something is stupid....remember: you are not your own. The ONLY THING THAT MATTERS IS WHAT GOD THINKS!

I will be the first to admit, that the Apostolic Church will challenge you to higher commitment, than most denominational Churches; but, the precepts & concepts that will be taught, were common in most of "Churchianity," just a few years ago! Other Church groups have thrown away much exterior Holiness over the past few years, but they have also embraced: smoking, drinking, sexual sin, and are ordaining homosexuals into the pulpit.

(THAT IS NOT THE PATH FOR AN APOSTOLIC CHURCH!)

REMEMBER: the mount up of error in drafting....

EX: When setting trusses 1 foot apart, you place your original where it belongs. Then, you don't measure the next 1 foot from the last, you measure 2 foot, from the original. You may have made a slight error in your truss. Therefore, if you measure the current one from the last one, you will suffer what is called, the "mount up of error." ***
*The ONLY way to protect this, is to always measure from the original. *** Measure your*

Spirituality from the original Acts Church - not the generation right behind you! If you measure your experience from just those behind you....lest you get off course over time.

WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, don't think that outer disciplines themselves will make you like Him. Only the work of the Holy Ghost can do that!

HOLINESS IS A MANDATORY GOAL: BUT IT IS A PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD. Like a farmer, after doing all the right disciplines....he waits for God to do His part.

Ephesians 2:8 *"For, by Grace, are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."* Remember, we must obey Acts 2:38 for full Bible salvation.

BUT REMEMBER TO STAY BALANCED

James 2:14 *"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?"*

WE CAN LIVE HOLY!WE MUST LIVE HOLY!....by works & faith. It is not an undue burden on God's people to have some distinguishing dress codes to demonstrate our commitment to Him in this world we live in.

Paul's advice to Timothy is a good admonition for us!

1 Tim. 4:7 *"But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself, rather unto Godliness."*

This session serves as a conceptual foundation....

*** We will begin to look at some specifics in the next 3 sessions ***

PART TWO

PART II. CHRISTIAN CONCEPTS OF DRESS

1 Samuel 16:7 *“But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused Him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”*

There you have it! This won't take long, because God is not worried about how we dress! Right? Some would think so, but let's examine closer.

It was stated in the last session: Balance is our Goal. I want to show you that the way you choose to dress is both, RELATIVE & IMPORTANT! (but not to impress God). If you want to impress God, then concentrate on your Spirit, attitude, & inner values.

NOTICE: vs. 7, does not say, God approves of ungodly dress. BUT, it shows that He does not evaluate us totally, on that level, alone. *** One thing, vs. 7, does show, is that God looks where man can't. BUT MAN DOES LOOK ON THE OUTWARD APPEARANCE, because that's all he can see! THAT'S WHY IT'S IMPORTANT! This verse is NOT a valid argument, to say our attire is not important, if anything, it is a verse, to argue the opposite! How we dress, is important, because man looks at it!

Your dress makes a statement about you: It reveals your feelings, commitments, frame of mind.

Romans 6:17 *“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine, which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. 19 I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so, now yield your members servants to righteousness unto Holiness. 20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. 21 What fruit had ye then, in those things, whereof ye are now, ashamed? for the end of those things, is death. 22 But now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto Holiness, and the end everlasting life.*

Matthew 7:20 *“Wherefore, by their fruits, ye shall know them.”*

Many fruit trees look similar, but their external fruit gives them their distinction. (so will ours). As a P.A. system speaker only amplifies what is being played in the through it, so does your dress only amplify your inner heart. We need to present a distinctive look, to amplify our faith!

THERE ARE TWO MAJOR, BUT BASIC CONCEPTS TO REMEMBER:

*** #1. **MODESTY** = humble, decent, (root of moderate)

1 Tim. 2:9 *“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; 10 But, (which becometh women, professing Godliness) with good works.”*

The subject of this passage is Christian wives:

1 Peter 3:3 *“Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 5 For after this manner, in the old time, the Holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection, unto their own husbands:”*

The key idea of modesty, is that we should not lend ourselves to ostentation of dress & costly array, but rather be distinguished by a proper Christ-like Spirit. (remember = meekness is not weakness). Women of the world spend so much finance on exterior aids to beautify....all of which, are false. God wants you to focus on your Spirit where true attraction takes place!

I want to stop and explain a Spiritual principle. Ever notice, as the weather warms, it becomes increasingly simple to distinguish God's people. (smile) MODESTY never goes out of style, in God's eyes.

A CHRISTIAN'S - MODESTY DOES NOT CHANGE WITH THE WEATHER!

When Adam & Eve had their conscious awakened, the 1st thing they did, was cover themselves. The 1st thing God did, was change fig leaves, to skins. (blood sacrifice). God's intentions, since then, is for humanity to be clothed. It has been stated: *“the farther a civilized society declines, the more clothes it takes off.”* The inverse then, is the more civilized a society is, the more clothing it wears.

Important point here....IMMODESTY IS DRIVEN BY SPIRITS! Look at Spirits, listed in the Bible: fear, lust, jealousy, etc....Many are human emotions, but Satan comes and snares us and drives our feelings far beyond their intended use. (puts us in bondage).

Luke 8:26 *“And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. 27 And when He went forth to land, there met him out of the city, a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. 28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not. 29 (For He had commanded the unclean Spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes, it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil, into the wilderness). 30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.”*

REMEMBER FOLKS: -- it is the devil who brings bondage, not God! Do you want freedom? Look at the man's actions! (get serious with God, for help!).

LADIES: The fact is, that men are more visually oriented than you are. But, yes, modesty applies to both sexes! Things to consider: Necklines, tightness, skirt length, skirt slits, shorts, pant suits, etc....Not exposing your body.

It is true, that you cannot keep someone from lusting after you, but you can undertake your responsibility, not to provoke it!

*** A women who purposely causes temptation, becomes a stumbling block! ***

ASK YOURSELF --- are these things really unreasonable for God's Church?

Paul knew that your dress is the mirror of your mind. We often dress the way we feel.

Outward ostentation (showy display) is not keeping with a Godly attitude. We were told to dress with shamefacedness, sobriety, etc....

Shamefacedness: self-restraint, reverence, modesty.

Sobriety: Discretion, Temperance, (opposite of pride).

Modesty is not an option for a true New Testament Apostolic Church!

*** #2: **DISTINCTION**

Deut. 22:5 *“The woman shall not wear that which pertained unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD, thy God.”*

One thing for sure: The “unisex” styles, of our day, are an abomination to God. It is a perverse hostility to God’s Creation order! It is driven by Spirits, that wish to put humanity into rebellion.

Men & Women are different: Both Physically & Emotionally, by Creation. And God has placed certain social methods into place, to maintain this difference. To guard against homosexuality & the decline of the family. Today, we have women that look masculine & men that look feminine.

1 Cor, 6:9 *“Know ye not, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind.”* --- > (Webster’s: unsuitably womanish).

What are some objections?

*** Objection #1: vs. 5, does not apply to our culture, because vs. 10-12, do not apply. However: vs. 22, prohibits adultery, vs. 23-27, rape, vs. 30 incest; do these still apply? Of course. We must understand the difference between the MORAL LAW &

the CEREMONIAL LAW.

*** This is the key to rightly dividing the Word, here! ***

Christ's death, on the cross, abolished the ceremonial law, but not the moral law. God's moral law, stands forever! (the O.T. was the schoolmaster, that brought us to Christ).

Col. 2:14 *"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; 15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. 16 Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of any Holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but, the body is of Christ."*

Handwriting of ordinances = "the obligation of debt, that demanded payment."

WE WERE IN DEBT TO THE MORAL LAW OF GOD! -- HE NAILED IT TO THE CROSS!

Jude 3 *"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for Me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints."*

Separation of the sexes is a moral law, not a ceremonial law! Verses 10-12, teach principle of separation. Israel fulfilled the ceremony physically....Today, we fulfill the principle Spiritually. (we still obey the typology of separation)

vs. 5, is blatantly a moral law for 3 reasons:

*** a) God designed it, to prevent moral problems, like blurring the sexes & homosexuality.

*** b) It manifests the distinction between male & female, that is taught in other Scriptures, and in nature.

*** c) The verse states, that it is an abomination, to God, which means, “something God detests or hates.” The word, Abomination, is only used in vs. 5. (and it’s unto God).

Hebrews 13:8 *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”*

*** God does not change from day to day, as to His feeling about moral sin. IF HE SAID IT WAS (moral) SIN IN O.T., IT STILL IS!

Malachi 3:6 *“For I [am] the LORD, I change not;”*

In the ceremonial law: things were abominations to the Jews (ex: Lev. 11) (unclean animals) things Jews should hate. Dressing alike to the point of blurring the sexes, is something God hates! Please notice the following thought:....

Revelation 21:9 *“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.”*

There is some N.T. support also:

1 Peter 3:5 *“For after this manner, in the old time, the Holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:”*

THE POINT: << HOLY WOMEN OF OLD, LIVED BY DEUT. 22:5 >>

*** Objection #2. Men & Women, both, wore robes. True: But men & women, did have distinctive clothing, or else, why the command? (different types of robes & head gear) Women wore veils, also.

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Quote from Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, pg. 227 *“Among the Hebrews, neither sex was permitted by Mosaic Law, to wear the same form of clothing as was used, by the other.*

A few articles of feminine clothing carried somewhat the name and basic pattern, yet, there was always sufficient difference in embossing, embroidery, and needlework, so that in appearance, the line of demarcation between men & women, should be readily detected.”

Wight noted about modern times: *“Among the Bedouin Arabs of Palestine, there is great care taken, that either sex, shall not imitate the other, in matters of dress.”*

*** These differences were significant enough to tell one’s gender from afar off.

Genesis 24:64 *“And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she [had] said, unto the servant, What man [is] this, that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant [had] said, It [is] my master: therefore, she took a veil, and covered herself.”*

NOW TO PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Part of our DAILY attire, should be, for gender distinction. Unmistakable, visual, identification of the sexes.

IN OUR CULTURE: ---- (which is all we need to worry about)

Man's attire: = pants, trousers, slacks.

EVEN THE PICTURES ON PUBLIC REST ROOMS TELLS THIS CULTURAL TRUTH. This could even change from culture to culture, but Deut. 22, covers ALL CULTURES! and all times.

"Pertaineth to" = things traditionally associated with, or patterned after a man. (slacks, have indeed, been masculine, in our culture).

HISTORICALLY: WW II, factories were the first time slacks started being worn, by women.

At the same time: short hair, cigarettes, swearing, became acceptable, feminine behavior. Now that path, has come to Abortion, Divorce, Single Parent homes, extreme feminism: You've come a long way, baby??

WHAT ABOUT MODESTY? Pants are not necessarily more modest, than a skirt. It is interesting that every generation of women, before us, learned how to wear a skirt modestly. * As a matter of fact, a dress tends to change a woman's actions, to be more feminine.*

THIS IS ANOTHER BENEFIT BEHIND THE CONCEPT

Some women are immodest in a dress, because they're so used to pants. (based on how they sit and move, etc..)

Our Local Standard: For those few occasions, where modesty in a dress is a genuine concern....Dress length, blousy culottes, that appear as a skirt, is a possible alternative. I feel this meets the distinctive quality. (unless you have a personal conviction about that). ** Each household should develop its convictions. ** (culottes = "a divided skirt"), not pant length.

TWO THINGS SHOULD ALWAYS GOVERN YOUR DECISIONS:

GOOD TASTE & COMMON SENSE == R e m e m b e r i n g * w h o * y o u * a r e !

God visibly separated Israel: food/dress/farming/worship/Sabbath....You could tell a Jew by his dress/Actions. The Jews survived 1,900 years, without a home land. It's the only existing ancient culture! GOD'S LAWS PRESERVED THEIR IDENTITY! God wants to preserve His Church, in this day, in the same manner!

---- >>> Outer actions bring a GREATER CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT in your life!

Even Joan Rivers (on her syndicated talk show) stated, "Everybody knows women wear dresses and men wear pants."

If worldly people know it to be a simple truth, why does God's Church act so stubborn about it?

Let us remember who we are and be proud to carry His banner in these last days!

PART THREE

PART III: GENERAL CHRISTIAN APPEARANCE

A Biblical Look at Jewelry & Make-Up & The Church Today

Romans 12:1-2 *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, Holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, Will of God."*

By general appearance, what we mean is: the manner, in which, you “carry yourself.”
Now God is concerned about this: BECAUSE....

2 Corinthians 5:20 *“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech [you] by us: pray [you] in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”*

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I hope to answer, in this segment, some questions concerning makeup and jewelry, as it pertains to our Apostolic Church, in the 21st century.

As a child of God, we cannot be overly concerned with what the world thinks. If you are, it will cause you a lot of grief.

Psalms 1:1-2 *“Blessed [is] the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight [is] in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate, day and night.”*

NOTICE THE REWARD: *“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly [are] not so: but, [are] like the chaff, which the wind driveth away. Therefore, the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.”*

Don’t sit in the counsel of the ungodly, or even sit in the seat of the scornful: If you detest drunkenness: then don’t be seen in bars and clubs, keeping that type of company.

Jesus only kept company with sinners to win them, not to enjoy their sin! Away from Church, as well as at Church: CONSISTENCY IS OUR GOAL!

MAKE-UP

This is an issue of association: Without exception, every example of make-up, in the Bible, is associated with wicked women. Queen Jezebel, (who was a VERY WICKED WOMAN), when trying to seduce Jehu:

2 Kings 9:30 *“And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard [of it]; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window.”*

* Painted: root Hebrew: = paint, dye, (stickum for the eyes) fair colors, glistening paint.

* Tired: perhaps a better word: attired (adorned)

*** Let's be honest: we would have to recognize, that what we call make-up, is really nothing more than painting your face. THEREFORE, I could say, I am going to Builder's Square and buy a five-gallon bucket of make-up for my house. The only difference between normal & a clown, is the amount. Somehow, paint sounds cheap, but make-up, is “cultural.” - but, it's the same thing. Even the world acknowledges someone “overdone,” as a “Jezebel.”

Eye make-up started in Egypt about 3,000 B.C. Egypt is a type of sin and bondage throughout the Bible. (it sure didn't start, in Israel, among God's people). Look at Solomon's advice to young men:

Proverbs 6:25 *“Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids.”*

Painting the face is direct, simple pride & vanity, at its rawest form. It is simply designed for sex appeal; it has no other purpose.

In the Scripture: it always denoted boldness, seduction, ostentation, and even

prostitution.

NOTICE THESE TYPES OF GOD, SPEAKING TO BACKSLIDING ISRAEL....

Jeremiah 4:30 *“And [when] thou [art] spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; [thy] lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life.”*

Ezekiel 23:38-40 *“Moreover this they have done unto me; they have defiled my Sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my Sabbaths. For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my Sanctuary to profane it; and, lo, thus have they done in the midst of mine house. And furthermore, that ye have sent for men to come from far, unto whom a messenger [was] sent; and, lo, they came: for whom thou didst wash thyself, paintedst thy eyes, and deckedst thyself with ornaments.”*

NOTICE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JEZEBEL & ESTHER

Esther 2:13 *“Then thus came every maiden unto the King: whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the King’s house. 14 In the evening, she went, and on the morrow, she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the King’s chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the King no more, except the King delighted in her, and that she were called by name. 15 Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail, the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the King, she required nothing but what Hegai, the King’s chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her.”*

The royal courts of the King used cosmetics & jewelry. SHE RELIED ON INNER BEAUTY, RATHER THAN MAKE-UP TO WIN THE KING. All she used, was oil of myrrh perfume, and preparations to beautify the skin: (ie: perfumes, lotions, skin care,

etc...).

Esther 2:12 *“Now when every maid’s turn was come to go in to King Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odors, and with other things for the purifying of the women.”*

DID YOU KNOW? American colonies between 1700-1800 make-up was outlawed?
*** up until 1945-1950, it was considered sin, by most Churches.

DO WE FOLLOW SOCIETY, OR THE SCRIPTURE?

Acts 5:29 *“Then Peter and the [other] apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God, rather than men.”*

*** These are issues that do not always have specific Scriptures of complete prohibition.

*** (Rather, these are issues of Biblical Association).

PRINCIPLE OF INTEREST TO CONSIDER....

Exodus 38:8 *“And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the looking glasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation.”*

The Laver of water, was a piece of furniture, that gained them access to the Holy Place! It was made of the mirrors of the woman....

An Apostolic preacher one time said.... “Revival will come when we get the mirrors out of women’s hands!” His point: (symbolically). Our women must get over this self-conscious hurdle of the world.

JEWELRY

The Scripture often associates “excessive” jewelry with Pride & Idolatry. Look how consistently, the association is made. When Jacob went back to Bethel to renew his relationship with God, he disposed of all the idols & earrings, owned by his family.

Genesis 35:2 *“Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that [were] with him, Put away the strange gods that [are] among you, and be clean, and change your garments: (Verse 4) And they gave unto Jacob, all the strange gods, which [were] in their hand, and [all their] earrings which [were] in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak, which [was] by Shechem.”*

Look at God’s response to Israel after they made the golden calf out of their jewelry.

Exodus 33:4-6 *“And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him, his ornaments. For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the Children of Israel, Ye [are] a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore, now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. And the Children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the Mount Horeb.”* -- (stiffnecked had to do with the long gold neck collars).

Where did God’s people get the jewelry anyway? ---Exodus 11:2--God told them to borrow if from the Egyptian neighbors, prior to the Exodus: His intent was to use it for His use, not their personal ornamentation. It was due to its value, not vanity!

Another time, Israel received gold from the Midianites, they offered it to God. (which is the proper response).

Numbers 31:50-51 *“We have therefore, brought an oblation for the LORD, what every man hath gotten, of jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, rings earrings, and tablets, to*

make an atonement for our souls before the LORD. And Moses and Eleazar, the Priest, took the gold of them, [even] all wrought jewels.”

In Gideon’s day, Ishmaelites & Midianites were distinguished from the Israelites by their use of jewelry & earrings.

Judges 8:24 *“And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me, every man, the earrings of his prey. (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites). 25 And they answered, We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein, every man, the earrings of his prey. 26 And the weight of the golden earrings, that he requested, was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold; beside ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment, that was on the Kings of Midian, and beside the chains that were about their camel’s necks.”*

REMEMBER: ISRAEL IS A TYPE OF THE CHURCH

Hosea 2:13 *“And I will visit upon her, the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgat Me, saith the LORD.”* (Unfaithfulness, is likened unto an adulterous woman).

LISTEN TO GOD’S JUDGMENT UPON THE PROUD, HAUGHTY WOMEN OF ISRAEL.

Isaiah 3:16 *“Moreover, the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: 17 Therefore, the LORD will smite with a scab, the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts. 18 In that day, the LORD will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires, like the moon, 19 The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, 20 The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, 21 The rings, and nose jewels, 22 The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, 23 The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils.”*

Even the articles of clothing that can be worn innocently, are judged here, because of the Spirit of Pride. The same could be true, for our generation.

*** SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT: If Pride & Vanity is not the reason for wearing jewelry, then it should be no problem to dispose of it, for the sake of your Christianity.

DEFINITIONS:

- * Cauls: a jeweled netting for the hair
- * Round Tires: round pendent for the neck (moon-shaped)
- * Mufflers: a long veil
- * Wimples: a wide cloak

If we want the Glory of God in our life, in our homes, and our Church, let's deliver ourselves of our symbols of our Vanity.

Take these things into consideration, when choosing your dress & appearance, etc. Some good advice for our local Church, is the following:

Philippians 4:5 *“Let your moderation be known unto all men. The LORD [is] at hand”*
(Excessive jewelry is improper for a Child of God).

What about the New Testament? (subject here is wives):

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1 Peter 3:3-4 *“Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But [let it be] the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, [even the ornament] of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the sight of God, of great price.”*

REMEMBER BALANCE: It is obvious, that a total prohibition of gold, was not the point. For, if that verse was an instruction to not wear any gold, then we would have to submit to not wearing any apparel, either. Surely, that is not the point! (smile)

For us, a good rule is: Let's not wear things that have no value or use, other than ornamentation. Example of things that do have use, beside ornamentation: wedding rings, tie tacks, watches, glasses, etc....

LISTEN FOLKS....IF YOU WANT TO GROW IN GOD, LOOK FOR PRINCIPLES AND NOT JUST LAWS, IN THIS BIBLE. Therein, lies real growth material!

Here is one of those principles.... (recall the story of Esther)

Esther 2:12 *“Now when every maid’s turn was come to go in to King Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women;) 13 Then thus came, every maiden unto the King; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the King’s house. 14 In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the King’s chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the King no more, except the King delighted in her, and that she were called by name. 15 Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail, the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the King, she required nothing but what Hegai, the King’s chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her. 16 So, Esther was taken unto King Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. 17 And the King loved Esther, above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight, more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen, instead of Vashti.”*

LADIES: You do not need to endeavor to be overly trendy in the worlds eyes....Listen to the chamberlain....(Pastoral Ministry). God is pleased with women and men, that will concentrate on Holiness.

SO, WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WITH YOUR JEWELRY THEN?

Exodus 25:1 *“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the Children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart, ye shall take my offering. 3 And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, 4 And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats’ hair, 5 And rams’ skins, dyed red, and badgers’ skins, and shittim wood, 6 Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, 7 Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and*

in the breastplate. 8 And let them make me a Sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. 9 According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the Tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it."

Take an offering - AND BUILD GOD A CHURCH!

PART FOUR

PART IV: THE DOCTRINE OF HEADSHIP, AUTHORITY, AND HAIR

1 Cor. 11: 1-16

Some preliminary observations:

* 1. This chapter has been commonly IGNORED, except for communion! But, communion & headship issues were dealt with in the same chapter. Who was the chapter written to?

1 Cor. 1:2 *"Unto the Church of God, which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:"*

* SOME SAY, IT WAS ONLY TO CORINTH: DOES NOT APPLY TO US. WELL??

Throw the whole book out then! And Romans while you're at it!

2 Timothy 3:16 *"All Scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, in righteousness:"*

*** WE MUST OBEY THE WORD OF GOD, regardless of how it troubles us, at

first!

- * 2. Paul is responding to questions asked by the Corinth Church.

1 Corinthians 7:1 *“Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me:”*

They had asked about: marriage/Spiritual gifts/food offered to idols/giving/etc....These are important subjects however, as always, Paul dealt with the deeper issues first! Envy/strife/division/judgmental attitudes/tolerance to sin/bringing law suits against fellow brothers in Christ/immorality....

ONLY AFTER THESE BASIC ISSUES OF INWARD CHRISTIANITY WERE EXPLAINED, did Paul begin to deal with symbols of that Christianity.

Matthew 23:23 *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier [matters] of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”*

UNDERSTANDING THIS POINT, KEEPS A CHURCH FROM BECOMING LEGALISTIC

Legalism:

- * 1. Basing salvation on the performance of strict codes
- * 2. Imposing rules that are not Biblically based *** this subject is worthy of an entire Bible Study itself *** (refer to lesson one)
- * 3. We cannot assume, that because something does not make sense to us, that it therefore, does not make sense to God!

Isaiah 55:8-11 *“For My thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways My ways, saith the LORD. For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper [in the thing] whereto I sent it.”*

IF GOD’S WORD DEALS SO MUCH WITH A SUBJECT, THEN IT’S IMPORTANT!
LET’S LOOK AT HAIR IN THE O.T.

* 1. Hair was used as a partial test of the Law of Jealousies - (Lev. 13 & 14) ---
Some scholars believe that the sentence of Law of Jealousies, was to have the head shaved.

- * 2. Nazarite Vow had 3 specific restrictions, including one on hair.
 - * a. never eat/drink things made with grapes
 - * b. never touch a corpse
 - * c. never cut their hair

-----Nazarite Vows are not valid in the N.T., but the principle of God, using hair as a symbol, is credible.

- * 3. Listen to the instructions of a Jewish man, marrying a P.O.W.

Deuteronomy 21:10 *“When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the LORD, thy God, hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou has taken them captive, 11 And seest among the captives, a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife; 12 Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails; 13 And she shall put the raiment of her captivity*

from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother, a full month: and after that, thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife.”

- * 4. Young men call Elijah “BALD HEADED” (worthless, without Glory).

2 Kings 2:23 “And he went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth, little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald-head; go up, thou bald-head. 24 And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them, in the name of the LORD. And there came forth, two she-bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.”

- * 5. IN THE O.T., CUTTING OF HAIR WAS A SYMBOL OF SHAME OR MOURNING!

Ezra 9:2 “For they have taken of their daughters, for themselves, and for their sons: so that the Holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass. 3 And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished.”

- * 6. Listen to the judgment of God on Israel

Isaiah 3:24 “And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell, there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle, a rent; and instead of well-set hair, baldness; and instead of a stomacher, a girding of sackcloth; and burning, instead of beauty.”

- * 7. In the O.T., hair was a symbol of the blessings of the Lord: God spoke to Ezekiel - said to prophecy of the sins of Jerusalem. He saw her as a bloodied woman that he restored and married and is now lovely!

Ezekiel 16:7 *"I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare. 8 Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a Covenant with thee, saith the LORD GOD, and thou becamest mine. 9 Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil."*

* (washed and anointed) = (SYMBOLIC OF BAPTISM & HOLY GHOST)

* 8. God used hair, in judgment to men, also.

Daniel 4:33 *"The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' [feathers], and his nails like birds' [claws]."*

HAIR

1 Cor. 11

Let's take a quick analysis of the text:

VS. 3: This verse brings us to the subject of HEADSHIP

Head = GRK (kephale) = denoted authority.

DON'T MISS THE POINT! The true subject is Relationship & Authority *** The concept of headship/submission, is best described, as Relationship & Responsibility NOT Superiority & Inferiority! God did ordain the man to be the head of the home (but, in the sense of responsibility, not tyranny).

1 Peter 3:7 *“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with [them] according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife,, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the Grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.”*

Ephesians 5:23 *“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church: and He is the Saviour of the body. Verse 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but, that it should be Holy and without blemish. So, ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. Verse 31 For this cause, shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two, shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak, concerning Christ and the Church. Nevertheless, let everyone of you, in particular, so love his wife, even as himself; and the wife [see] that she reverence [her] husband.”*

The wife is to respond to this role, by submitting to sacrificial BIBLICAL leadership!

Ephesians 5:22 *“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the LORD. Verse 24 Therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so [let] the wives [be] to their own husbands, in everything. Verse 33 Nevertheless, let everyone of you, in particular, so love his wife, even as himself; and the wife [see] that she reverence [her] husband.”*

MEN: IF YOU LEAD WITHOUT TAKING HER INTO CONSIDERATION, YOU ARE FOOLISH. >>>BUT, IF YOU LET YOUR WIFE RULE THE ROOST, YOU'VE MESSED UP ON THE OTHER SIDE. I CAN'T STAND A WIMPY MAN! ---& NOBODY CAN STAND A TYRANNICAL MAN. Make decisions, based on Biblical thinking, not emotions!

*** The head of Christ is God = this refers to the role of the Messiah (flesh) to the

omnipresent Spirit of God. This verse does not teach Trinitarianism. ***

VS. 4: a man should not pray or minister with his (physical) head covered, because of VS. 7: this IS A SYMBOL of the submission to his (Spiritual) head! “Having his head covered” = “Echon Kephales Kata” (GR/Italics) NIV says, this means, long hair. Martin says: having his hair “hanging down” *** VS. 4: does not use covering, as a noun. Nothing in this verse refers to a material veil....always refers to hair.

THE ONLY COVERING IDENTIFIED IN THE CHAPTER IS HAIR: VS 15

1 Corinthians 11:15 *“But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for [her] hair is given her, for a covering.”*

WE CAN GET DEEP....OK?

The word, “cover” in Verses 4-7 = “Katakalupto” - it means = “to veil, wholly cover”

The word, cover in VS. 15 = “Peribolaion” - it means = “to throw around” - also: “veil or mantle”

Katakalupto is a derivative of the root word “Kata,” a preposition meaning = “down from, to cover or hide”

IS THAT DEEP ENOUGH? OK? -- (SMILE), but it’s not that hard! Verses 4-7, teach that a man’s head is to be uncovered and a woman’s head is to be covered. BUT, IT DOES NOT TEACH WHAT THE COVERING IS!

“Katakalupto” in VS. 6, is a verb / “Peribolaion” VS. 15, is a noun - THEY CANNOT BE INTERCHANGED.

THE HAIR IS THE COVERING....HAIR IS THE SYMBOLIC ISSUE HERE!

VS. 5: Again, it is physically possible to pray uncovered, but you symbolically dishonor your husband or father (symbolically). The passage is describing proper decorum, while at public worship. The symbols denote the relationships. (Man to Christ, the same as woman to man, etc....)

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VS. 6: Women convicted of immorality, had their head shaved.

Jeremiah 7:29 *“Cut off thine hair, [O Jerusalem], and cast [it] away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the LORD hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.”*

God, metaphorically told women, to cut their hair as a (symbol of shame). Remember the two women in the N.T., who washed Jesus' feet, with long hair?

ZONDERVAN BIBLE DICTIONARY noted that in the N.T., hair was a major distinguishing factor of the sexes.

PAUL WAS ANSWERING the CORINTH CUSTOM => He was not suggesting a break from that custom. In Corinth, to be without a veil, would be a shame, therefore, if you're not wearing one, then you might as well cut your hair, also. (because, in Corinth, it would have the same effect).

- * SHAVEN: “to cut near the surface” make bare, smooth
- * SHORN: “to cut with shears” to remove by cutting

VS. 15: States, that if a woman has her natural, long hair as a covering, she does not need anything else. If she has short, cut hair, she can wear a veil, but it is still a shame.

Verse 5 = having her head uncovered, is the equivalent of being shaven. NO

QUESTION WHAT SHAVEN IS == > IT IS A SHAME. REMEMBER, THE O.T. VERSES? God considers a woman that has her head shaved, to be a symbol of shame & humiliation....vile, disgrace, dishonor.

HENCE VS. 6: (explanation): If a woman does not have long hair, (covering) then let her remain cut (for now)....But, since it's a shame for a woman to have cut hair, let her be covered. In other words, (let her hair grow again)! This is the answer for new converts!

WHAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH?

*** If a woman is presently uncovered, because she has cut her hair, she should be permitted fellowship into the Church body, even in that condition. But, since it's a shame for her to be in that condition, she should stop cutting her hair, and let it grow back again, as a covering, and for her glory.

THIS IS THE SIMPLE N.T. TRUTH FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH!

Judgment begins at God's house....(conversion). This issue is not "how long" her hair is, but that she simply stop cutting it. In 1 COR. 11, the issue was never if a woman should have long hair, (that was a given). It was, if Corinthian women had to wear a 2nd covering.

*** Paul expected women to wear veils, in Corinth, because it was the symbol of modesty. But, he did not expect all cultures & times, to do so.

VS. 7: Man is the image of the Glory of God. The woman is the glory of the man. GOD CHOSE THE SYMBOLS!

Proverbs 12:4 *"A virtuous woman [is] a crown to her husband: but, she that maketh ashamed [is] as rottenness in his bones. (crown is the symbol of majesty)"*

The hair is a symbol, but remember, God is looking for symbols!

VS. 8-9: God made men & women different. Hair was a human choice way to conform to that difference and accept our role to God's present standards and authority.

VS. 10: The Spirit world looks for symbols of rebellion. Notice: Angels here, is the same word, translated angels in Revelation, Chapter 2. Angels, was translated "messenger" or "Pastor." *** As Pastor, I am looking for the symbols of commitment & submission to Christ & the Ministry, when choosing leaders for Ministry, among the body. I believe this verse applies to both, Pastors & the Spiritual world.

--- > This would keep inline with the headship/authority theme, placing the Ministry into picture!

NOW LADIES: For those of you that are veterans of these alters, listen up! Trimming your hair is a violation of this Scriptural principle! When you trim your hair --- what your telling me is, PASTOR, I'M BEHIND YOU 90%! ---- > Also: It makes no sense to practice a level of personal consecration, by not cutting your hair, then, cut your daughters hair? ----train up a child in the way they should go!

"But, I'm not convicted about that Verse"....(after serious consideration)? (well, it's still the Word) = means, I don't agree.

James 1:19 *"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: 20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. 21 Wherefore, lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness, the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But, be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 23 For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 25 But, whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful*

hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

LISTEN: THERE IS A PRICE TO PAY FOR IMPARTATION!

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To engraft a limb into a tree.... You must pierce it! Pull it open and place a branch in it, then wrap it up and let it "weep!" (sap) KNOW WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT? REMEMBER WHAT HAIR SYMBOLIZES? SUBMISSION TO AUTHORITY!

VS. 11-12: Men & Women are equal before God. (but each with their own roles).

Galatians 3:28 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond or free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

*** BE CAREFUL THAT A LUCIFER SPIRIT DOES NOT GET IN YOU.... This Spirit exalts itself over leadership! God has appointed a set man (Pastor) in every Church! 1 COR. 11, is so important, because it lays out God's feelings about authority! It's no accident, that communion follows:

*** (Discerned not the body) If a person does not realize who he is OVER and UNDER, in this issue of authority and headship, then you will miss the anointing that breaks yokes!

Psalms 133:1 "A Song of degrees of David, Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! 2 It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;"

The anointing always flows down the flow of leadership to the body! WE NEED TO BE WILLING TO PAY A PRICE FOR GOD'S POWER IN OUR LIFE! HOLINESS STANDARDS ARE ISSUES OF CONSECRATION AND POWER WITH GOD!

*** There is an impartation to be obtained for those that will go the second mile! ***

When my faith goes beyond just words.... when it becomes something that effects my everyday life, I am pleasing unto Him!

VS. 13-15: Basis of science. Men go bald (inherited) not women (male pattern baldness).

VS. 16: Contention is not of God. This verse is the Summation of the whole text. We have no custom of encouraging women to pray with their head uncovered. (Why would Paul spend 15 verses to set a present point, only to throw it all out the window)??

Notice Verse 14, Paul bases his teaching on hair on the foundation of nature. That's why it applies to us. Jewish, Greek, & Roman Christians all agreed on this point. (VS. 16) (Neither the Churches of God) -- There was no argument in the other Churches about this issue.

SOME OBJECTIONS PEOPLE RAISE:

- a): Short hair is prettier. -- I ask to who? Not God.
- b): Short hair is easier to care for. -- that is true, but since when do we, as Christians, base life decisions on convenience? Sin is easier than righteous living also! So Do We Do That? (of course not)
- c): It's only a shame! (would any serious student want to live in shame before God? SHAME: "shameful, indecorum" root word is: = "base, filthy")
- d): Cutting hair makes it grow. No it doesn't, nature controls. Hair is a symbol of what should be in your heart. We don't judge each other by these, we encourage each other to good works.
- e): What if my hair won't grow? Length is not mentioned as much as just letting it grow. Don't cut it, let nature take over.
- f): But, I don't know what to do with long hair! Get instruction from Godly ladies. YOU DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO DRIVE OR COOK EITHER, UNTIL YOU WERE TAUGHT!

HISTORY

--- Long hair was the norm in American culture until the 20's. A woman by the name of Castle (silent movies) bobbed it for shock effect. It became known as the symbol of rebellion of the "roaring 20's," which was her point.

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UNCUT HAIR ON A WOMAN IS PLEASING TO GOD!
SHORT HAIR ON MEN IS PLEASING TO GOD!

When everything is said and done: The question remains, HOW MUCH DO WE WANT TO PLEASE GOD?

OUR HAIR IS A SYMBOL OF OUR DEDICATION TO GOD AND OUR SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD! (This is a basic Biblical doctrine, on which, we will not swerve).

1 Corinthians 14:37 *"If any man think himself to be a Prophet, or Spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. 38 But, if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant."*

All this we do for love's sake --- > Because We Are His!

John 14:15 *"If ye love me, keep my commandments."*

"Slipping Past the Harbor"

A Study of Bible Standards Regarding Hair & the Order of Creation

Rev. M.D. Treece

transcribed and annotated by M.W. Bassett

M.D. Treece reading and translating from a Greek manuscript of Hebrews:

Hebrews 2:1 *“Because of this, it is necessary that you carefully tie down the things that you have heard, lest at any time you slip past. For if the words spoken by angels were firm and every “stepping around” and every “listening around” receives a just payback of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect such a great a salvation, which had its beginning to be spoken through the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them who heard Him, with God witnessing together, with signs and wonders, and with many kinds of powers and divisions in the Holy Ghost, according to his wish.”*

The word that the writer uses, saying to be very careful to “tie down,” means to “moor:” as in “to tie or moor down the boat.” He is admonishing the Christian to tie down the things that you have heard, very securely, just as you would a boat, lest at any time, it slips away out of the harbor. He says, that the Gospel truth of salvation, must be tied down securely, for if it is not tied down, it will slip, as it were, past the harbor. We are reminded here, that if the word spoken by angels was firm, and every stepping around them, or listening around them, received just payback, then those who today, listen around or avoid certain truths, as many do, can expect no less certain, a reward for their neglect. Such people will receive a just payback, if they are allowed to slip out past the harbor.

The writer has one main purpose here: to display the greatness of salvation. He is making it clear, that if you do not keep life and the precious gift of salvation in focus, and do not retain an understanding of what’s what, and of who’s who, then the truth will slip away, and you will eventually become a mimicker of some religious pattern, passing by the true Gospel. Do not “step around,” or “listen around,” the understanding of how great God is! How great is God? The Old Testament gives us a picture:

“Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:” (Psalm 104:3).

“Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them, hath he set a Tabernacle for the sun, Which is a bridegroom, coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.” (Psalms 19:4-5).

The rafters of His house are in firmaments. He rides the thick clouds and marches upon the wind. He is bigger than this world, and views this world from outside of the galaxy. He marches forth as a bridegroom from the outward edge of the orbits.

We can be in danger of imagining God to be as small as our thinking. But the Psalm writer says otherwise. He tells us, that the planets and the firmament grow old, but God does not. He changes the universe, as one would change clothing, when it becomes old and puts on a brand new cloak. God is very great, indeed! If we do not “tie down” how great God is, we will confine Him to a certain, limited time period, or a limited dimension, and thus, lose this and many other truths, and let it all just slip away. But, that is not all.

Salvation is great, because God is great, but also because, man is great! The writer goes on to look at man, the recipient of salvation:

“But one, in a certain place, testified, saying, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? Or the Son of Man, that thou visitest him?” (Heb. 2:6 [Psalm 8:4]).

Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

The Order of Creation

Here is man: everything was subjected to him beneath his feet, and there was nothing left which was not subjected beneath him! (VS. 8). God made man a little

below the angels, according to verse 7. The source of this verse, and then the Septuagint, both say here, that man is made a little lower than Elohim. The New Testament translates angels, or messenger, but here it says Elohim, the word most frequently translated, "God," in the Old Testament. Adam and the son of Enoch (human being) was crowned with glory and honor, and placed him over the works of God's hands. But, if man loses the perspective of how great man is, in that, he was created in the image of God, he will lose the grasp upon salvation itself, and it will "slip past the harbor." We must not misunderstand how great God is, neither must we misunderstand how great man is.

Then, man is made, just a little lower, than Elohim. You may ask the question, "Is God interested in how man looks?" He certainly is. Paul spoke to the Athenians and said, referring back to their own philosophers, showed, that while God made all sorts of creatures, man is unique: Their own philosopher said, "We are the off-spring of God" (Acts 17:28-29), and Paul talked with them about what then we could suppose God looks like. Paul said, that God certainly did not resemble stone, silver or gold, or the substance of the idols, which they had constructed. No, man is the offspring of God. Does it not stand to reason, that if we are the offspring of God, then God does look somewhat like us, for we are made, to lack just a little, from Elohim.

Paul carried this instruction, relative to the image of God, into the book of 1 Corinthians, in dealing with the *sunerchomai* or "the gathering together of the Church." He says here, that it is important how you appear, especially how your hair is, when you come before God. Anyone praying or prophesying with their head in the wrong condition, dishonors their head. The reason for this, is that one's hair is the symbol for the order of creation.

It has been often said, that Paul deals only with a local custom, or cultural matter, here. That is incorrect. Paul references all the way back to creation in this teaching, and states, that any woman praying or prophesying with her head uncovered, dishonors her head (1 Cor. 11:5). The previous verse, (vs. 3) tells us who her head is: "... the

head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God.”

Man is the head of woman, but God is the head of Christ. Many people do not know why women ought to wear uncut, long hair, and men ought to cut their hair short. The reason is, that it establishes and promulgates the knowledge of the order of creation of man. Three times in chapter 11, Paul refers to the order of creation. This Scripture is not arbitrary and does not describe an option, regarding the keeping of one’s hair. It tells us, that when in the presence of God, He is looking at us. If you do not have the appropriate covering or keeping of one’s head (hair), further dealing with God, will be on an improper being, that he or she is ill equipped to be in the presence of God. God is great, and to be honored above all, but man is the image and reflection of God. In 1 Cor. 11:7, Paul uses the word, *doxa* to express that man (in his redeemed state) *reflects* the image and light of God. When He sees man, He sees Himself. Woman, on the other hand, is the image and reflection of man. Man is the only creature that can stand in the presence of God, bare-headed, because he is the only creature that is made in the image and likeness of God.

In verse 10, Paul said, a woman ought to have her head covered in the presence of God, because of the angels, and that this is power for her. What have the angels to do with a woman’s appearance? The angels also cover their faces when in the presence of God. Only man is made to be uncovered in God’s presence. The woman needs authority upon her head, because of the angels. The covering is her authority, or means to come before God.

The length of the hair of man and woman is distinct, inasmuch, as woman is out of man, and man is not out of woman, but both of them are out of God. The distinction needs to be understood by Christians. It has nothing to do with intelligence, superiority, or any controversies which have been associated recently with “women’s liberation.” This doctrine’s clear and principle message has to do with the order of creation, and God wants us to maintain creation’s order, bearing witness to the fact, that man alone,

was made in the image and likeness of God, and woman was made differently. When a woman comes into the presence of God, and has her hair cut like a man, she is removing herself from the order of creation, because she is not the image and reflection of God: man is God's image.

The Ultimate Consequences of Disorder and Confusion: Perversion

We must be careful to “tie down” the knowledge of how great God is, and how great man (and woman) is, or our boat will “slip past the harbor.” In Romans 1:18-32, Paul warns of the danger to those, in whom, the knowledge of the order of creation becomes confused and distorted. If we forget the order of creation, man begins to think of himself differently. He begins to worship anatomy, putting the creation before the creator, and soon makes gods from four-footed creatures. Then they begin to indulge among themselves for sexual gratification. Women together with women moving from their natural order, into the perversion of lesbianism (vs. 26), and men among men (vs. 27), doing the same thing. To describe these abhorrent perversions, Paul uses two words, describing these activities in 1 Cor. 6. One is *malakos*, means “soft,” and refers to boys purchased and used for homosexual purposes. The other is, *arsenokoites*, simply meaning, “abusers of one’s self, sexually.” He is saying, that we will get utterly out of balance and in conflict with nature, if we lose focus of the order of creation, and that hair, is a symbol of that greatly important order!

A Man’s Head to be Uncovered in the Presence of God

The head of man is Christ. A man who comes to prayer with his head *covered*, that is, having his hair hanging down (the word used is *kata*, meaning “down from,” repeated in vs. 7, by *katakalypto*, meaning to cover over), dishonors his head; Not his skull, but Christ. Many have taught that this refers to a veil, apart from the hair. This does not refer to a cloth or other material for veiling! No reference to a veil does not enter, until verse 16.

The normal word for veil, is *kaluma*, but the word, *peribolayon* is found in verse 16,

translated in the KJV, as “covering.” But seeing the term, *kata* combined with *katakalypto*, we can easily understand, that God is forbidding a man to coming before Him, with hair “hanging down,” covering his head. Man was made in His image and likeness, and is the only one who can stand in the presence of God.

There is no controversy in Scripture. In Exodus 34:33-35, Moses put a veil on his face after the passing of the Glory. It was profane to look upon, that from which the Glory of God, was being withdrawn. While he was prophesying, he was uncovered. When a man seeks to enter before God to pray or prophecy, he should prepare himself by cutting his hair. A Bible believing Christian should believe, that to do otherwise, is futile. One preacher tells a story of the earlier days, in which, he had spent his tithe money on groceries, and left them in the house while attending to an errand. Upon returning, he discovered that his hogs broke into his house and destroyed all the groceries. Intending to go to prayer and seek relief from God for his misfortune, his knees bent and as they hit the floor, God spoke one word to him: “Tithes.” The preacher realized, that it was no use to complain to God, since he stood condemned of robbing God, to obtain the food in the first place. Bible believing Christians ought to realize that their hair ought to be prepared to honor their head, and that prayer and worship without such preparation, is defiant and hypocritical.

Unlike Moses, children of God, under the New Covenant, are changed, as they behold the image of God, day by day, *into His image*. We can see in a mirror, His image forming in us. The issue for a woman, is Scripturally, another matter.

Should a Woman Prophecy in Church?

Controversy has arisen, from time to time, regarding the reading of 1 Cor. 14:34. Some have flatly denied the place of a woman to prophecy, always a verbal annunciation. This controversy is addressed as we notice, that Paul is writing in 1 Cor. 11:5, concerning the *sunerchomai*, the gathering of the Church. Here, Paul teaches, concerning women who do pray and prophecy in the Church. The same words are

used for praying and prophesying by women, as were used for men. Evidently, a woman can prophecy in the *sunerchoma!* If it is insisted, that women should keep silence unconditionally, we have either, a very inconsistent apostle, or a misreading of 1 Cor. 14:34. So much for Paul forbidding women from a public and verbal involvement, in the public worship, in the presence of God!

The Woman's Covering

If the woman is uncovered, that is, if she does not have the “hanging down” covering (*akatakaluptos*, see the terms *kata*, and *katakaluptos* above), then she dishonors her head (man), because she is the image and reflection of man. As emphasized numerous times already, the order of creation is established by this relationship. If we blend and blur the sexes, the world responds with a volume of perversities, and loses all track of right and wrong.

How Long?

Having simply heard that a woman ought to have long hair, many ask “How long?” There are two words, used to deal with the cutting of hair, in this chapter. Taking the verse, containing both from context, lets look at them:

“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.” (1 Cor. 11:6).

The word, shorn is from the Greek, *kiero*. It means to take a knife or scissors to the hair, in trimming or cutting and is applied to the shearing of sheep, as in Acts 8:32. The second word is, *xuaro* and this means, to shave, raze, or utterly remove. *Kiero* appears in Acts 18:18, where Paul took a vow, and *cut* his hair.

“And Paul [after this] tarried [there] yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence, into Syria, and with him, Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn [his] head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.” (Acts 18:18).

The vow referenced, in this verse, is from *euche*, and is the same word used in James 5:15, for “the *prayer* of faith.” He cut his hair, because he had a prayer. Paul believed what he preached. Paul had just been delivered from the court of Gallio. Paul did not shave his head because he was taking a vow (we would re-enact no such imaginations today, yet, we say Paul is an apostle of our Church), rather he trimmed his hair because he was going to prayer! Men ought to ask themselves, “when I come to pray, how does my hair look?” When foolishly imagining that God does not care what we look like, we need to remember that we are being changed into His image. There is no authority in Scripture to exclude the matter of one’s appearance from the domain, over which, God has jurisdiction.

The two words are equated in 1 Cor. 11:5, where Paul says, it is one and the same, if a woman is shorn or shaven: in either case, she is uncovered (ou katakalupto), and dishonors her head. If a woman cuts some of it off, she may as well shave it, as it relates to a covering before God, and it’s power or authority to pray and prophecy. This is the clear instruction of Apostolic leadership.

A word found in verse 14, which is found nowhere else in the Bible: *komaō*. In the passage:

“Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But, if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her; for [her] hair is given her, for a covering.” (1 Corinthians 11:14-15).

The verb implies, a condition which remains to be seen, expressed in the present tense, active voice, and subjunctive mood. By expressing in this manner, Paul is saying, that if a man continues to have short hair, or regularly cuts it, he maintains his authority in the presence of God, with respect to his head. That is, he is not shamed. But, if a woman continues to have uncut, and therefore, long hair, it is a glory to her. The tense and mood of this verb, leaves no room for debate. The condition of a man or

woman's hair is a continuing and incomplete project. It must be maintained. For a man, cutting maintains his relationship to his head. But, the head of a woman is honored by continued growth, acknowledging the covering and her position in creation.

A Gray Area of Scripture? Ask the Angels!

Some have been known to say that this is a "gray area of Scripture." The only reason to call it gray, is because of a refusal on the part of such debaters, to believe and obey the clear message. Paul used everything, at his disposal, to convincingly relate the matter of one's hair, to the order of creation. A woman, he says, ought to have power on her head, because of the angels! (Verse 10). Why? Because angels were present in the creation; they know the order of creation! The woman has authority: not *dunamis*, but *exousia*, or a legitimate place in the order of things. The hair on your head is a woman's authority, in the presence of God, and in the world of angels and demons. I would adjure you: do not attempt to cast out demons with your hair cut, Sister. I would advise you not to come to pray or prophecy into the presence of God, having your hair cut. When you come into the presence of God, having your hair cut, or you have some idea in your head of changing your image to look like a man, in some way, it changes your relationship with God, and you have no authority.

Angels know authority. Even demons know where things culminate. When the demons in the man of the Gadarenes saw Jesus, they called him the Son of the Most High God. They served the devil, but called Jesus, the Son of the Most High God, and had to ask permission, regarding their future. They knew authority.

Elsewhere we read of a centurion, whose working knowledge of authority was equated to faith:

"And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto Him, a centurion, beseeching Him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The

centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the Word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this [man], Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth [it]. When Jesus heard [it], he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But, the children of the kingdom, shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said, unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, [so] be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.” (Matt. 8:5-13).

This man said that he believed that Jesus had sufficient authority to carry out His Word and Will, through simply, issuing it. Jesus responded, by lifting him, as an example of faith, above anything known in Israel.

These examples show how very important that a knowledge and obedience to the proper order of things is to the Lord, and to victory in Spiritual matters. Indeed, the key to the whole power of God, rests in the obedience of those who approach Him, and their honor of His authority, in keeping their *true* place. Your hair is the symbol of your place in creation, order of man, and becomes your authority before God and angels.

The Teaching of Nature

Nowhere else does Paul exert so much emphasis in using so many comparisons, as here. In verse 14, he asks:

“Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?”

This part of the discussion begins with Verse 13, where Paul asks, “Is it comely, that

a woman pray unto God, uncovered?” Right here, many are lost right away and without an answer. Let’s look into it. The word, comely is *prepo* and means “proper.” It is the same word used where Jesus is requiring that John baptize Him, saying, “It is becoming, it is necessary, it is right, it is proper for us to do so....” It is needful or required to fulfill all righteousness! Again, the same word is used to say that we needed such a High Priest, as Jesus, for we could do with no other (Heb. 2:10). It was essential and needful, or proper.

So, returning to the earlier matter of vs. 14, Paul is saying, that long hair is improper. Remember, this is not simply a matter of option or style. It is a question of requirement. Nature, says Paul, is teaching that men ought not to have long hair.

But, how does nature teach, they may ask? Take a look at a number of men who have reached mature years. No doubt, the answer will stand out, eminently. We find very few bald women in humanity, but as men age, by some complex genetic mechanism, most men will experience some baldness. He is clearing off the head of the man, as time goes on. Sickness is associated with the balding of women, but many men begin to bald, as early as their mid-twenties. Nature’s teaching may be so plain, that it escapes our sophisticated minds, but observe men spending thousands of dollars, attempting to reverse the work of nature. They did not miss its lesson, although they do not understand it.

God’s love is demonstrated, in that man is allowed to stand before God, with his head uncovered. But, when woman comes in, she wears her hair long. That is not to say that she is lesser, or insignificant, but she is agreeing in the truth, “I am not the first in the order of creation.” We are substantiating the order of God’s creation, in obedience, to this teaching. When any preacher says that they were simply dealing with a local culture, or custom, just remember, he wants to dodge the Word. There is no stronger Scripture, anywhere, in the Bible, than is used here.

God *is* Concerned with the Appearance

When you come into the presence of God, look at yourself. He wants to know, “where is your authority?” and the first thing he looks at, is your hair. The Charismatic world tells us, that God does not look in the outward appearance, yet both, Paul and Peter, told the women how to dress.

On a related study, some ask whether we have any Scripture to reprove the painting of the face. Jude tells us, that it was the fallen angels, who taught them to defile the flesh. The term which we read, as defile, literally means, to stain or paint. Both, Jude and Peter, quote the book of Enoch. It tells how they taught the women alchemy, that is, the shadowing of the eyes with a silver metallic program. He taught them that you do not braid gold and hair (1 Tim. 2:9, 1 Peter 3:3). Also, the putting on of pearls, is abjured (1 Tim. 2:9). Paul, was indeed, very concerned with the “outward appearance,” as a part of the Spiritual Tabernacle. The wearing of expensive clothes, is also denounced, among the Church.

Attitudes of boldness, among women, and other defiance against the order of nature, is rejected by God. If a woman has long hair, it is a radiance, and a splendor to her. Of course, this goes beyond the hair and touches the meaning ascribed to the hair, by God the Creator.

Style is not mentioned in this Scripture. Only cutting and shaving are involved. The reason is clear: it is because of the order of creation.

Most visual depictions of Jesus Christ, arrive with us from the middle ages, and from a time when most rich nobles had Catemites (see above) for sexual appetites, and wore long hair, often believing perverse ideologies, suggesting that they received power through the long hair. A society, which loses track of the order of creation, will become investing in all the perverse side-streets, which darkness has before mapped. When women and men lose their place, homosexuality and bestiality, will be inevitably

adjoined.

Until very recently, Israelites were not found depicted in ancient artifacts, unearthed by archeologists. This is obviously because of the injunction against the making of graven images. We are familiar with the ancient depiction Assyrians, Philistine, and other heathen with long hair and beards, often woven together. However, recently an image discovered in northern Israel, above Galilee, shows Israelites being enslaved by Philistines and we see all of the men there, with hair cut very short, unlike the manner of the heathen round about Israel.

God's Gift of a Proper, Natural Veil

The women in the images are covered with veils as was the custom of the time, but the men are clearly visible in these images. So, in the mind of some, the question remains: "Is Paul talking about a veil, or hair?" There should be no question after reading verse 15:

"But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering."

Reading Paul literally, a woman's hair is given to her instead of a veil. As mentioned earlier, this is the first appearance of the term, *peribolaion* (veil). The word "for" comes from *anti*, or "instead of." It literally reads, a woman's hair is given to her *instead of a veil*. Ladies, will you be properly covered in the presence of God, or will you forfeit your authority, claiming an illegitimate place in the order of things? God did not intend for women to wear a piece of cloth over their head, for he gave the natural covering of her hair, instead.

Contention? Not in God's Church!

To complete the course, we must acknowledge, that even the last verse here, has often been misread. Reading 1 Cor. 11:16:

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

This does not say, “If you don’t like it, you don’t have to do it.” It reads, “If a man is considering being a *philoneikos*, we don’t have such a habit, neither any of the Churches of God.” It doesn’t say, that if you don’t like what I’ve written, in 16 verses, don’t do it. In fact, Paul says, “if you don’t like what I’ve said, and don’t agree with it, and want to argue about it, we don’t have the custom of being a fight lover.” He leaves no road open, except understanding.

Equivalent of the Word for standard, is used multiple times in the Scripture. We need to distinguish between man’s tradition and Bible standards, but sixteen powerful verses of Scripture here, in Paul’s first letter to the Corinthian Church, leave no doubt, as to the authority which teaches the order of nature and the wearing of a Christian’s hair. We have no custom of fighting, but are used to people loving and obeying God.

Keeping the Order of Creation:

Worship in Spirit and in Truth

Returning to Heb. 2:8-10....

8 *“Thou hast put all things in subjection under [man’s] feet. For in that He put all in subjection under Him, He left nothing [that is] not put under Him. But, now we see not yet, all things put under Him.”*

9 *“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with Glory and honour; that He, by the Grace of God, should taste death for every man.”*

10 *“For it became Him, for whom [are] all things, and by whom [are] all things, in*

bringing many sons unto Glory, to make the captain of their salvation, perfect, through sufferings.”

Everything man was not, Jesus is. We see Jesus Christ, and all things subjected unto Him, so that He might lead many sons into Glory. Women, your long hair is given to you as a covering, so that when you come into His presence, praying or prophesying, you may show Him, that you are complying with His Divine order in creation, otherwise you have no authority. Men, your hair is to be cut short when you come before the presence of God, for you are made in the image of God and are His reflection. In all things, let Jesus Christ be preeminent, and head as the Head of man, Head of the Church, receiving the Highest praise and worship!

Ministerial Authority

Peter exhorted elders not be “lords over God’s heritage,” but, “examples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:1-3). By this simple statement, Peter demonstrated, that there are limits to ministerial authority. What kind of authority has God given the ministry? Where does a minister’s authority begin and end? There is a point when a minister passes the bounds of legitimate authority and leadership and begins to exercise ungodly control over God’s people. What is that point? How do we determine it? How do we recognize it?

That the ministry has been given authority from God, and our need to submit to that authority, is not disputed. The following verses demonstrate this truth clearly:

Hebrews 13:7 *“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you, the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.”*

Hebrews 13:17 *“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with*

joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 *“And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves.”*

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1 Corinthians 16:15-16 *“I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints), That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to everyone that helpeth with us, and laboureth.”*

2 Corinthians 2:9 *“For to this end, also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.”*

2 Corinthians 7:15 *“And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst He remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received Him.”*

To explore the basis and extent of ministerial authority, then, is not tantamount to an undermining of ministerial authority. It is merely a pursuit, to determine what kind of authority the Word of God has delegated to those who shepherd God’s flock. What follows, is not an attempt to demarcate a specific line, but to give some principles whereby, we can decipher when a minister or leader has stepped beyond the legitimate use of his God-given authority, and stepped over into the realm of self-proclaimed power and control.

To understand the authority of the ministry, we must first understand the purpose of the ministry. This is most clearly defined in Ephesians 4:7-16:

“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore He says:

“When He ascended on High, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.”
(Now this, “He ascended;” what does it mean, but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended, is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things).

vs. 11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. vs. 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, vs. 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head; Christ; from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working, by which, every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” (NKJV)

The purpose of the ministry is to equip the saints to do the work of ministry, and to edify the body of Christ. The ministry is ordained, by God, until the body of Christ comes to believe one doctrine, have an intimate knowledge of the Son of God, and be complete in Christ, measured by the stature of His fullness. This will never be fully accomplished here on earth. The purpose, will be ultimately fulfilled, when we are glorified together with Christ; therefore, we can be assured that the ministry will continue, until that time. The ultimate goal of the ministry is to establish the saints, in truth, by teaching them the Word of God. Then the saints of God will not be tossed back and forth by every false doctrine that is traveling about the circles of men.

In addition to describing the purpose/function of the ministry, Paul gives some insight concerning how the body of Christ is to function. Both, the ministry and the laity, are part of the same body, working together, for the same purpose (see Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-30). Each member is to do his own part, according to the Spirit's enablement, producing growth in the body. The ministry's job is to train the saints to do

the work of the ministry. It can be said that the ministry is to reproduce their own selves. Even Paul admonished others to follow him as he followed Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Sometimes the ministry is viewed as “those in charge.” The five-fold ministry does have Spiritual authority invested in them over the rest of the Church, but what is the purpose of this authority? In 2 Corinthians 10:8, Paul wrote, “For though I should boast somewhat of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction....” Authority is given for edification, not destruction. This does not exclude the use of rebuke and correction when needed, but it does exclude the idea of being mere disciplinarians (2 Corinthians 10:9-15; 13:10; 2 Timothy 3:16). The true purpose of the ministry is to serve as good examples to the rest of the body, so that they may follow. Note the numerous references to this principle in the Epistles:

1 Corinthians 4:16 *“Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye followers of me.”*

1 Corinthians 11:1 *“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”*

Philippians 3:17 *“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.”*

1 Thessalonians 1:6 *“And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:”*

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 *“And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you, in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly, in love, for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves.”*

2 Thessalonians 3:7 *“For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;”*

2 Thessalonians 3:9 *“Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.*

Hebrews 13:7 *“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.”*

1 Peter 5:3 *“Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock.”*

Paul urged the saints to pattern their lives after his own. Even today, we strive to pattern our lives after Paul and other men, renown for their living faith in Christ. They lived exemplary lives and inspire us to be more like Jesus. That is what a true minister will do: inspire others to be wholly dedicated to the Lord. Paul recognized his divine authority, but did not use that authority for fleshly purposes. Rather, he made himself an example to the believers. He did not demand followership, but gained followership, because he led a life, that when witnessed by others, produced a desire in them, to pattern their own lives, after his.

Paul made it clear, that a godly minister will be recognized both, by the Word of God he preaches/teaches, and by the way he lives his life. He instructed the saints to imitate the faithfulness of these men, taking into consideration, the outcome of the lives they led. Leaders can only lead, if people are genuinely following them. As a wise man once said, “If you think you’re a leader, but have no one following you, you’re simply taking a walk.” The purpose of the ministry is not to act as a dictator over God’s heritage, but to be an example to His flock.

Characteristics of Spiritual Abuse Resulting from a Misuse of Authority

Several years ago, I came across a book on Spiritual abuse by Ronald M. Enroth, a professional on cults. Enroth described the common traits exemplified in Spiritually

abusive Churches. I will not mention or expound on all of the traits outlined in Enroth's book, but I will relay some of the more pertinent traits found among Churches that abuse.

The most common trait exemplified in abusive Churches, is an authoritarian leader. This trait is not limited to our own day. Peter wrote about these kind of leaders in his first Epistle: "To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock, that is under your care, serving as overseers -- not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:103 NIV). In John's third Epistle, we read of one named Diotrephes, "who loveth to have the preeminence among them [Church]...." John told Gaius, "Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the Church." (3 John 9-10).

Things have not changed much from Peter and John's time, to now. There are still some ministers who lord it over the flock. Enroth wrote, "Leaders who practice Spiritual abuse, exceed the bounds of legitimate authority and 'lord it over the flock,' often intruding into the personal lives of the members. God's will is something that *they* determine for you, rather than something you individually seek to know. Abusive leaders are self-centered and adversarial, rather than reconciling and restorative."

Jesus spoke directly to the minister's attitude toward authority:

"Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great, exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but, whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

(Matthew 20:25-28). (emphasis mine)

Many leaders in the Church have ignored Jesus' Words for the past 2,000 years. Instead of acting like servants, many Church leaders have acted like religious despots. The Words of Jesus indicate, that the Church operates from an entirely different governmental system and philosophy, than that of the world. The source of authority for the Church, and the way that authority is to be expressed, are entirely different, than that of the world. "The world's view of authority places men over one another, as in a military command structure, a business executive hierarchy, or a governmental system" But, as Jesus carefully stated, '....it shall not be so among you.' "Some Churches, however, have ignored Jesus' command, as they copy the world's authority system in the Church." Commenting on this, Ray Stedman said:

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Probably with the best of intentions, it [the Church] has nevertheless repeatedly borrowed into the authority structures of the world, changed the names of executives from kings, generals, captains, presidents, governors, secretaries, heads, and chiefs to popes, patriarchs, bishops, stewards, deacons, pastors, and elders, and gone merrily on its way, lording it over the brethren, and thus, destroying the model of servant hood, which our Lord intended.

Ministers are to have the heart of a servant, not the heart of a dictator. The leaders of the Church are not to be like the leaders of nations. Leaders of the Church are to pattern their ministries after Jesus, a humble servant; however, this is probably the least noticed, and least acquired trait among the ministry. How does a servant influence others to follow him? It is certainly not by demanding or ordering them around. It is by persuasion on his part, and voluntary consent on others' part. The ministry was given to the Church, by God, to guide the saints. As a shepherd loves, protects, and guides his flock of sheep, a minister is to love, protect, and guide the saints of God. He is to lead them to Jesus, their Lord and Saviour. He is not to punish them and treat them as lesser saints.

Misinterpreted Texts

Some have tried to use the Scripture to claim illegitimate authority over the flock of God. First Thessalonians 5:12-13, is often used, for this purpose. Paul told the Church, at Thessalonica, to “know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly, in love, for their work’s sake.” The phrase, “over you in the Lord,” however does not indicate the ruling over of others. The Greek work, *prohistamenous* (translated “over”) means, “standing before.” Leaders stand before others, leading the way. Leaders can only lead those whom they persuade to follow them, and according to Jesus, they should approach leadership as a servant, not a master.

One of the reasons God-given authority is abused so often, is due to a failure to distinguish between God-given *authority*, and self-appointed, self-achieved *power*. Concerning this subject, Cheryl Forbes writes:

Power means insistence on what we want for no other reason than that we want it; it means making other people follow us, despite their own wishes. Power is assumed, insensitive, dehumanizing, and ultimately destructive. Authority, on the other hand, is positive, and usually involves a conferred right within strictly controlled bounds.

The exercise of power always implies coercion and violence, because the purpose of power is to reproduce itself. Whatever tries to prevent this reproduction, must be disposed of. An exercise of authority, however, should have nothing to do with coercion, violence, or manipulation. Yet, in our zeal for God’s work, we decide, that if someone won’t recognize our authority, we will force him, with our power.

“The Spiritual autocrat, the religious dictator, attempts to *compel* subordination; the true Christian leader can legitimately only *elicit* followership.” The Apostle Paul said it this way:

“Moreover, I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you, I came not as yet unto Corinth.

Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: *for, by faith, ye stand.*

But, I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you, in heaviness. For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same, which is made sorry by me? And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy, is the joy of you all” (2 Corinthians 1:23-2:3, emphasis mine).

Abusive leaders focus on themes of authority, submission, and Spiritual headship. Obedience to God is achieved through obedience to the man of God, it is said, This is how they are able to win and secure the obedience of the people. “Spiritually abusive groups routinely use guilt, fear, and intimidation, as effective means for controlling their members.Leaders consciously foster an unhealthy form of dependency, Spiritually, and interpersonally, by focusing on themes of submission, loyalty, and obedience to those in authority.” Ministerial authority is Biblical and so is submission to that authority, but if a minister’s focus is on this authority, his whole ministry will be out of perspective.

Another Scripture used to justify unlimited authority is Hebrews 13:17. The author tells us, that we are to submit to the authority of our leadership, because they exercise their authority for our benefit and the Lord’s sake. Why, then, do we often find it difficult, to submit to the authority of some leaders? Is it rebellion, or something else? To answer this question, let’s examine the Biblical relationship between a husband and wife.

In Ephesians chapter five, Paul instructed the Ephesian wives to submit to their authority saying, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church: and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the

wives be to their own husbands in everything.” (Ephesians 5:23-24).

To the husbands, Paul said:

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it.... So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh; but, nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord, the Church....

Nevertheless, let everyone of you, in particular, so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband (Ephesians 5:25, 28-29, 33).

The wives are to submit to their husbands, in everything. Before all the men say “Amen,” let us look at the flip-side of the coin. The husband is instructed to love his wife as he loves himself, and even as Christ loved the Church. If a husband loves his wife like he is supposed to, she will have no problem submitting to him, as she is supposed to. When both elements of love and submission are present in a relationship, there will be perfect working order. When proper love is not present, however, submission becomes rather difficult and is viewed negatively, rather than positively.

What does the husband and wife relationship have to do with submission to the ministry? Much in every way! The reason most people find it hard to submit to authority, is because they do not feel that the authority has a genuine love and concern for their well-being. It boils down to a love problem. The ministry is either, not loving the saints like they should, or else the saints are not perceiving their genuine love. We, as humans, find it very hard to submit to someone who does not genuinely care about us; however, if we are persuaded of their love, submission will come, rather naturally. It is easy to submit to someone, even if we do not agree with them, if we know they have *our* best interests in mind, and not their own.

Questioning vs. Challenging Authority

There is a difference between questioning and challenging authority. When one challenges God-given authority, they are fighting against God and are in rebellion. When one questions authority, however, they are merely seeking understanding to his/her decisions and teachings. Too many precious saints have been branded as rebels, because they question the authority over them. I do not believe we have rebels on our hands, but rather individuals who desire to understand the reasoning behind teachings and decisions, made by those in authority that affect their lives. Cults begin, when no one is allowed to question authority. A leader, is then able to control, instead of lead.

Every minister needs to be checked and balanced by other authorities. Our constitution has survived for so long, because it was set up with the system of checks and balances. Each branch of our government checks the other to make sure that no one branch gains too much power. Are the leaders of our government more open to questioning from others than some ministers are from the saints?

Among the many jobs of a minister, his main job, is to perfect the saints, bringing them to maturity in Christ. The ultimate end, is for the saints to have an established faith and walk with God, growing up in the Head, which is Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:14-15). The job of the minister, is to unite the hand of God and the hand of man, then step back once the union is complete. His role becomes one of guidance. The minister does not act as a mediator between God and man. The priesthood is over. We are all individual priests before God (1 Peter 2:9).

When a minister operates as a dictator, treating his saints as his “subjects,” instead of his brethren, he produces a codependency upon himself from the saints. This is very unhealthy and dangerous, Spiritually. It is not the minister’s job to declare the Will of God for an individual in every area of their life. His job is to teach them how to find the Will of God for themselves, so that they can walk with God, without depending on

another human being. It is like a baby, learning to walk. The parents help them walk when they are first learning, by holding their hands. The intent, however, is not to make that baby depend on them for walking the rest of his/her life, but to train him/her how to do it on his/her own. It is the same, Spiritually speaking. The minister helps people learn to walk with God, by holding their hand. This should only continue for a short while until the saints learn to walk with God on their own. This does not mean the minister's role becomes irrelevant, but emphasizes his role, as a helper to one's faith and relationship with God, and not the mediator of such relationship.

If a minister does not teach his saints how to walk with, and hear from God on their own, but has them codependent upon himself for their walk with God, what will happen to those saints when that minister is no longer with them? The saints will be lost! Why? Because they have not been taught how, or been allowed to grow up in the Head of the body (Jesus Christ), functioning as one of its members, but rather have grown up in one of the body's members (a man).

The minister's job, is that of a shepherd. He leads the flock that is following him, not making a flock follow him by dictating every step they take. As one saint asked, "Why did God give me the Holy Ghost, if I'm never allowed to listen to Him?" Some ministers seem to believe, that there "are believers, and then there are 'capital B' believers."

Some ministers make all the Spiritual decisions for their saints. This takes the responsibility of working out one's own salvation, before God, with fear and trembling and gives it to the ministers. This is not Scriptural. Look at what Paul said concerning this, in the Book of Philippians:

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling. For it is God, which worketh in you both, to will and to do of His good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings." (Philippians 2:12-14).

We (individuals) are to work out *our own* salvation, with fear and trembling, before God. How can this be done? It is done through God's Grace, working in us individually, giving us both, the desire and the ability to do of His good pleasure. Does this mean, we can decide what part of the Word of God we want to obey? No! The Word of God is forever, settled in heaven. What this means, is that our ultimate destiny, depends on our response to God's Grace. We have the sole responsibility of working out our relationship and salvation with God. God assists us, in accomplishing this, by working in us, that which pleases Him. In other words, God helps guide us into this relationship, with Him, that has to do with our salvation.

A minister should not have to make Spiritual decisions for the saints. They should be learning how to make them themselves, as they grow in God. This is part of their responsibility in working out their own salvation. Many times, what ends up happening is, that people are forced into working out their salvation, the same way in which, the minister works out his.

If we desire for the body of Christ to grow as it should, the ministry needs to be the example that it has been called to be, helping in the saints' faith, and not being lords over God's heritage. Once we are healed of Spiritual abuse and the misuse of authority, we will no longer fear to submit, but rather will do it joyfully and willingly, because we are assured that it is for our benefit and protection, coming from those whom we love, and those who love and care for our well-being.

***peitho* in Hebrews 13:17**

Introduction - The Meaning - The Rest of the Verse –
Relevance to the Believer -Conclusion

Introduction

Hebrews 13:17 *“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves:*

for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

This exegetical study focuses on the translation of the Greek, *peitho*, in Hebrews 13:17. The word is most always translated as, "obey" in the differing translations. Due to a lack of understanding and the importance of meaning behind this word, it has led many to a blind obedience to the ministry, and the ministry to wrongly assert their authority over the saints. The focus of this course is upon the correct understanding of the Greek word, as used here in this verse.

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This study is important for theological and practical reasons. This verse is commonly cited in connection with the Biblical view of authority and submission. If one reaches an incorrect theological conclusion concerning this verse, it will have practical effects that can be very damaging to the body of Christ. Many times, this verse is taken out of context, allowing many to abuse their authority in the Gospel without being questioned. I do not believe that this is always intentional, but it is derived from a misunderstanding of the Greek behind the English word, "obey."

The verse, as quoted above, is from the King James Version. Looking to other translations, *peitho* is translated in a similar manner. These would include, The Amplified Bible, The Berkeley Version in Modern English, The Revised Standard Version, and the New International Version. In all five of these translations, dating from four centuries to just eight years ago, *peitho* is translated as "obey."

Peitho appears in the second person plural, present middle/passive imperative, as *peithesthe*, followed directly by the dative plural, *tois egoumenois*, meaning "the leaders." The author was commanding (imperative mood) the Hebrew readers (plural) to continue to (present tense) "*peitho*," those who had the rule over them.

As just mentioned, *peithesthe* is in the middle/passive voice. Whether it is being used as middle or passive, can only be determined by the context, because both voices

share the same spelling in the present tense.

What is significant, is that *peitho* is not in the active voice. W.E. Vine helps us see the difference between the meaning of the active and middle/passive voice as it pertains to *peitho*: “In the active voice, [*peitho*] signifies, to apply persuasion, to prevail upon or win over, to persuade, bringing about a change of mind, by the influence of reason or moral considerations....; in the passive voice, to be persuaded, believe....” Vine commented further in another place saying, “....the Middle and Passive Voices signifies to suffer oneself to be persuaded....” To this, Liddel and Scott add, that in the middle and passive voice, *peitho* means, “to be prevailed on, won over, persuaded.” The Tragic writers frequently used *peitho* in the middle/passive imperative to mean, “be persuaded.”

It is interesting to note that every time *peitho* is translated in some form of “obey” in the KJV, it is always found in the middle/passive voice. Whether *peithesthe* is used as the middle or passive voice, in Hebrews 13:17, is not of much significance compared to the fact that it does not appear in the active voice. Concerning the voice, however, it is more probable, that the author intended the passive voice, seeing that the middle voice had nearly fallen out of use by the time Koine Greek came to be the prominent form of the Greek language.

If *peitho* was in the active, the author would have been commanding his readers to actively involve themselves in the act of obedience, apart from any other agent. Instead of the active, the author used the passive form to convey the idea that the subject was being acted upon in some way. It is the readers who were to be persuaded by the leaders. The readers were not so much being commanded to do the action, as they were to participate in the action, or receive the action through persuasion, though this does not negate the resultant obedience.

The Meaning

What exactly does *peitho* mean? The New Thayers Greek-English Lexicon says concerning this word, *peitho*; “lit. persuasion; to induce one by words to believe; to cause belief in a thing (which one sets forth), win one’s favor; to persuade unto; i.e., move or induce someone by persuasion to do something; to suffer one’s self to be persuaded; to be induced to believe; to trust.”

The Expanded Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words says, concerning *peitho*:

To persuade, to win over, in the Passive and Middle Voices, to be persuaded, to listen to, to obey, is so used with the meaning in the Middle Voice, e.g., in Acts 5:36, 37 (in verse 40, Passive Voice, “they agreed”); Romans 2:8; Gal. 5:7; Heb. 13:17; Jas. 3:3. *The obedience suggested is not by submission to authority, but resulting from persuasion.* *Peitho* and *pisteuo*, [meaning] ‘to trust,’ are closely related etymologically; the difference in meaning, is that the former implies the obedience that is produced by the latter, c.p. Heb. 3:18,19, where the disobedience of the Israelites is said to be the evidence of their unbelief. ...Of course, it is persuasion of the truth that results in faith (we believe because we are persuaded, that the thing is true, a thing does not become true, because it is believed), but *peitho*, in the N.T., suggests an actual and outward “*result of the inward persuasion and consequent faith.*” (emphasis mine).

Even when *peitho* denotes obedience, it is referring to an obedience, resulting from an inward persuasion and consequent faith. This involves the mental faculties of an individual, and interaction between the persuader and the persuadee.

Vine mentioned how *peitho* and *pisteuo* are related, etymologically. A good demonstration of this connection is Acts 28:24. Here, Luke contrasted those who believed (Greek *peitho*) with those who did not believe (the negative form of *pisteuo*). Luke was trying to demonstrate how some were persuaded by the teaching of Paul,

coming to have an inward persuasion and consequent belief in what he spoke. Others were not persuaded and remained in unbelief.

Peitho is used fifty-two times in the New Testament. It is translated in various forms of the words, “persuaded, trusted, agreed, yield, believed obey, confident, having made....their friend, confident, and assure” (see Matthew 27:43; Luke 18:9; Acts 5:40; 12:20; 13:43; 14:19; 17:4; 18:4; 21:14; 23:21; 2 Corinthians 1:9; 2:3; Philippians 1:14; 3:3; 1 John 3:19). Twenty-two times, it is translated in some form of “persuade;” nine times as “confidence;” eight times in some form of “trust;” six times as “obey;” three times as “believed;” and once as “assure,” “they agreed,” “yield,” and “having made....their friend.” The foremost concept of the word, and the way, in which, it is most commonly translated, is “persuaded.”

An example where *peitho* is translated as, “obey” is in Galatians 3:1, where Paul asked, “Who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth?” Although the English translation uses “obey,” the underlying concept, nevertheless, is persuasion. The Judaizers had come to the Galatians Churches, teaching that they must keep the Law of Moses, to be saved. Once the Galatians changed their mind, concerning what Paul had taught them and were persuaded by this false belief, they were no longer persuaded of the truth. Their actions were consequent to this inward persuasion. They no longer obeyed the truth, because they were no longer persuaded that it was the truth. (See also Romans 2:8; Galatians 5:7).

There are Greek words for “obey,” which carry with them the meaning of strict obedience for the sake of obedience, but *peitho* is not one of them. One such word, is *hupakouo*. The strict obedience, which is implied, can be seen in its usage in the New Testament. It is used in Ephesians 6:-1, 5, and Colossians 3:20, 22, for obedience of children to parents, and slaves to masters. It is used in 2 Thessalonians 1:8, for those who do not obey the Gospel. Hebrews 5:9, used the word in reference to our obedience to Jesus, and Peter used the word to refer to Sarah’s obedience to Abraham, in 1 Peter 3:6.

Since the author of Hebrews commanded the Church to be persuaded by those who had the rule over them, it would follow, that he was also indirectly implying that those who have the rule, or leadership, are to do the persuading. If *peitho* is passive, indicating that the Hebrews were receiving some aspect of the action, there must be someone who was involved in delivering the action. This being so, it would eliminate the notion of ministerial autonomy. The ministry is not a dictatorship. Instead, they are to possess the attitude of a servant. A servant does not attempt to accomplish his objectives by commanding his master, but by persuading him. The ministry's duty, is to persuade the saints from the Word of God/wisdom, while the saints' job is to allow themselves to be persuaded by the ministry over them, and subsequently, obey them.

Genuine persuasion will only come after one has placed his trust in those who have the rule over him. Trust is something gained over time and through experience. Persuasion will never come as a result of mere commands. Persuasion comes with explanation. The main avenue of persuasion, is teaching and reasoning, following the Apostolic method. (See Acts 13:43; 17:2, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8-9, 26; 20:7, 9; 24:12, 25; 28:23).

The Rest of the Verse

The next phrase, *tois egoumenois humon*, meaning "your leaders," is in the dative case. The particular use of this dative is the dative of person/thing. When *peitho* is followed by a dative of person in the Greek, the meaning is, to obey or follow.

The word "rule," comes from the Greek word, *hegeomai*....It means, "to lead, i.e., command (with official authority)." Thayers says it means, "to go before; to be a leader; to have authority over." The author of Hebrews wanted the Church to be persuaded of those who were the leaders among them. These men were those who went before others, leading the way.

The Greek word translated, “submit” is *hupеiko*. The word appears, only here, in the entire New Testament. It is a compound of two Greek words: *hupo*, meaning “under” and *eiko*, meaning “to yield.” Its literal meaning, is “to yield ones self under.” In this case, it means to yield ones self, under the leaders of the Church.

Relevance to the Believer

Let it not be thought that I am arguing that the idea of obedience is not found in Hebrews 13:17, but rather I am arguing that the obedience suggested, comes as a result of persuasion, not dictation. The Hebrews were to allow themselves to be persuaded to obedience. Their obedience was not to be blind obedience, but obedience that came by persuasion, from those who have the rule.

This passage has been illegitimately used to set up ministerial dictatorships that take prisoner-of-war, anyone who sincerely questions the teachings and practices of the ministry. This is not the point of the verse. In context, the author seems to imply, that the authority given to those who have the rule, is the authority of the Word of God (Hebrews 13:7). If it is the Word of God, and the passage implies that those who have the rule are to do some persuading, then the obedience being spoken of not some uncritically accepted, blind obedience to anything anyone in the ministry says, but the responsibility of the saint to heed to the authority of the Word of God, being spoken by the man of God. Nowhere does the Bible teach, that the saints must obey those who are not teaching God’s Word, but rather their own doctrines. Jesus called these the doctrines of men and rebuked those who advocated them and followed them, as though they were God’s Word (Mark 7:7-8; See also Matthew 15:9; Colossians 2:22). The authority of the ministry is rooted in the Word of God.

Nowhere does the Bible teach that a man’s opinion becomes as binding as the Word of God, simply because of his position, yet, some illegitimately teach from Hebrews 13:17, that if the ministry says “Jump,” the response of the congregation should be “How high?” Such a teaching is un-Biblical. The ministry is not equal with God, so that

they can teach and do whatever they like, without accountability to someone. They are shepherds over God's flock to lead it and guide it to Him, not to themselves. They are under-shepherds to the Great Shepherd, and thus, cannot simply make up their own rules, for all to follow. Their teachings must be rooted in the teachings of the Great Shepherd.

The saints are to be submissive to those who have the rule, following them as they follow Christ, but they are also to be convinced that they are following the direction and truth of God being expressed through the man of God, and not the man himself.

Conclusion

The literal sense of Hebrews 13:17, is as follows: "Be persuaded to obedience by those who have the responsibility of leading you, and yield yourselves under them: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

The obedience to the leaders is real, but what brings about that obedience is the persuasion exerted by the leaders. The job of the Church, is to heed this persuasion to the point of obedience. This course is not an attempt to rid the text of its call to obedience, but to demonstrate, that this obedience comes about by persuasion, not by a game of Simon-says obedience. I have attempted to demonstrate the process, by which, one arrives at obedience.

The Syntax, tense, voice, and mood of *peitho*, in Hebrews 13:17, all shed light on the meaning of the author's command to obey the leadership. It gives us a different perspective, that is commonly circulating today; being understood that the obedience, although real, is the result of persuasion by the ministry. The obedience of the saints, comes as a result of their faith, and their submission comes, as a result of persuasion, not fear.

A Pastoral Theology from 1 & 2 Timothy & Titus

The two epistles of the Apostle Paul to Timothy and one to Titus, are commonly called, the “Pastoral Epistles.” This is because they contain the instructions of Paul to two of his protégés who were given the responsibility to shepherd their respective flocks. For the purpose of interpretation, it is important to remember that these Epistles were written to individuals, and are not merely, a pastor’s handbook. The purpose of this course, however, is to uncover Paul’s theology as it pertains to the pastoral ministry, so only those passages relevant to this discussion, shall be addressed.

When the twenty-first century reader of the New Testament encounters terms such as “pastor,” “elder,” “presbyter,” or “bishop,” no doubt, he immediately feels that he knows precisely, the offices mentioned. Depending upon his denominational affiliation, he might identify the “pastor,” as the principal head of a local congregation, the “elders” as the board elected to govern the same, and the “presbyter” or “bishop,” as a kind of “super-pastor,” who governs a larger territory of Churches. There is no need, feels the modern Churchgoer, to re-examine these Church offices, for he has known them and seen them in operation his whole life.

The reader is encouraged, however, to shed his modern understanding of these roles and their official functions and attempt to achieve a first-century understanding of these terms. In other words, when reading the New Testament, do not ask, “How does my particular Church organization define these offices?” Instead, one must ask, “What did the author of a given New Testament book mean, when *he* wrote about them?”

Before one can attempt to form a cogent pastoral theology, he must first determine what exactly a pastor is. The difficulty here, is that the word translated, “pastors” (Gk. *poimenas*) is only used once, to refer to the ecclesiastical office, and beyond its meaning of “shepherd,” there is no description of it, there given ([Ephesians 4:11](#)). In the

so-called Pastoral Epistles, however, this office is described, in detail, in both 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. For the purpose of identifying the pastoral office, the Titus passage is most instructive:

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would, set in order, what remains and appoint **elders** in every city, as I directed you, namely, if any man is about reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the **overseer** must be above reproach, as God's steward....[Titus 1:5-7a, NAS, emphasis added].

In the above citation, Paul uses the term, "elder" (Gk. *presbuteros*) and "overseer" (Gk. *episkope*), interchangeably. This indicates that these offices are one and the same. These words may be transliterated, "presbyteros" and "episkopes," respectively. The Authorized Version of 1611, or King James Version, used the word, "bishop" to translate the latter. Biblically, then, neither a "presbyter" nor a "bishop" is in a position of ecclesiastical superiority, but both words refer to the very same office as the common pastor, regardless of any modern Church traditions or practices.

While it has been proven that the terms "elder/overseer/presbyter/bishop [episkopos]" are synonymous in the New Testament, this leadership office, has yet, to be linked to that of the modern pastor. Since neither, Timothy nor Titus contain the term "pastor," a passage outside the pastorals, must be consulted. In Acts 20:17, Luke writes that Paul called together "the elders of the Church." At the end of his address to them, he charges, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers**, to **shepherd** The Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28, emphasis mine; cf. 1 Peter 5:1-2). Again, "elders/overseers" are used synonymously. Apparently, these "elders/overseers" have been given the responsibility to care for "the flock" and are expected "to shepherd" them. If the English translation of this passage is not convincing enough to identify elders with pastors, a look at the Greek words, translated "flock" (*poimnioi*) and "to shepherd" (*poimainein*) reveals them to be cognates of the word, translated "pastors"

(*poimenas*). Additionally, the function of the Scriptural “pastor” is grammatically linked to teaching, in Ephesians 4:11 (cf. v. 14), and such teaching is a pre-requisite for the elder/overseer position (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9, et al). Therefore, it is safe to conclude that “pastor,” “elder/presbyter,” and “overseer/bishop,” all refer to the same position of leadership in the New Testament Church. If this is not the case, then there is no New Testament description of the pastoral office, and the common term, “pastor,” would best be retired immediately.

Now that the pastoral office has been identified according to Scripture, it is necessary to examine its function in the Church. The first question to be asked is, “How does one become an elder?” Contrary to the modern practice of electing leaders, in the Bible, a pastor or elder was appointed by a senior elder, as Paul practiced in the Churches he founded (Acts 14:23, et al) and as he commanded Titus and Timothy to do (1 Timothy 3:1-7; 2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 1:5). That these preaching and teaching elders were to be supported financially by the Church, is plainly taught in 1 Timothy 5:17-18. There was no stated term of office, so a lifetime of faithful pastoral service, is implied. It is assumed, though, that an unfaithful elder should be removed from service, if he were convicted of sin by the testimony of two or three witnesses, for Paul further instructs Timothy, to rebuke such elders before the entire Church (1 Timothy 5:19-20).

What are the pre-requisites for service, as a pastor? Sterling Christian character is foundational. According to Paul, the pastoral candidate, “must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable....not a drunkard, not violent, but gentle, not contentious, free from the love of money” (1 Timothy 3:2-3, NET; cf. 4:12b, 16; Titus 1:6-8, 2:1, 7). Recent converts are forbidden from the pastoral ministry, because of their tendency toward pride (1 Timothy 3:6), as are women, because of gender differences and the chain of authority evidenced at creation (1 Timothy 2:11-15; cf. 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6).

A final pre-requisite for a pastor is that he be “able to teach” (1 Timothy 3:2b, NAS), for this is the primary responsibility of a Christian leader. In the list of qualifications for

elders in Titus, Paul expands upon this definition: “He must hold firmly to the faithful message as it has been taught, so that he will be able to give exhortation in such healthy teaching and correct those who speak against it” (Titus 1:9, NET). He is to be the guardian of the apostles’ doctrine and communicator of divine truth to God’s people (1 Timothy 4:1-6, 11,13,16; 6:2-3; 2 Timothy 2:2, 14-15, 24-25; 4:2, 5; Titus 2:1, 7-8, 15; 3:8; cf. Eph. 4:11), and it becomes his responsibility, at times, to silence those who are teaching heresy to the flock (Titus 1:11; cf. 2 Timothy 2:25; 4:2). For the modern pastor, the apostles’ teaching is preserved in the New Testament, so it is to be studied with great care (along with the Hebrew Bible). The words that Paul wrote Timothy are applicable to the pastor today, in this regard: “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15, NAS). That the communication of Scriptural truth was to occupy the premier position in the Christian assembly or worship service, is evident from Paul’s instruction to “give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching” (1 Timothy 4:13b). Finally, with a view toward the future and the advancement of the Kingdom of God through proclamation of the Gospel message, Paul mentored Timothy and expected him to train up teachers, as well. (2 Timothy 2:2).

In modern Churches, there has been an unhealthy tendency of pastors to become bogged down needlessly in excessive, administrative tasks at the expense of studying and teaching the Word of God. Once again, the Biblical model provides the clear solution (and is echoed by contemporary business-management strategies): delegation. Appoint deacons to serve in these capacities, thus freeing up the elders, to fulfill their solemn charge of feeding the flock of God (Acts 6:1-6; cf. 1 Timothy 3:8-13). As a result of the apostles’ decision to delegate lesser responsibilities, “the Word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith” (1 Timothy 6:7). The elders were never meant to “micro-manage,” or control every aspect of the Church, but to “devote [themselves] to prayer and to the ministry of the Word” (1 Timothy 6:4). They are the only ones so enabled, so if the pastor is not in his “kitchen study,” preparing and serving Spiritual food for the flock, then who is?

The Church would do well, then, to rethink her usage of Biblical terminology, as pertains to leadership positions in the Church, for adopting Biblical terms to refer to non-Biblical offices, obscures the intended meaning of the original Scriptural office, and leads to general confusion. Simultaneously, she should endeavor to re-examine her Western, twenty-first century model of Church organization and pastoral duties, in the light of first-century, Bible teaching, on the matter.

“Be conscientious about how you live and what you teach,” wrote Paul to Timothy, and to Titus, “communicate the behavior that goes with sound teaching” (1 Timothy 4:16; Titus 2:1, NET). The call to Christian leadership is the most glorious calling on this earth, yet it carries with it, an awesome responsibility, both to exhibit, upright moral character and to teach the Word of God, with diligence. The Words of our Lord to Peter, echo today, as a sober reminder in the pastor’s ears: “Feed my sheep” (John 21:17).

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Legalism

Legalism is like a disease. It is both, highly contagious and deadly. It can go undetected and show no fatal symptoms for a long period of time. In the end, however, it always pays its toll. I've never heard anyone stand up and boldly proclaim, "I'm a legalist!" If someone realized they were bound by legalism, they would surely put an end to it. Unfortunately, legalism is very blinding. It's easier for a sinner to realize he is a sinner, than for a legalist to realize he is a legalist. As long as we can't identify what legalism is, it can keep us in its bondage.

Legalism is often times very hard to recognize and can be hard to distinguish from true Holiness. This is because the actions of the legalist, and the actions of someone who possesses true Holiness, are generally the same. The difference is the motive of the heart. One's motivation, is to save themselves, or keep themselves saved, while the other's motivation, is to please the One who died for them. Ray C. Stedman said:

Do you see how subtle this can be? The actual behavior can be exactly the same, in the case of a legalist or of one behaving as an authentic Christian. They both may be real Christians and their behavior may be exactly the same, but one is legalistic and the other is not. It is what is going on inside, that is the issue in question.. It is a matter of inner reliance. What are you reckoning on, to meet this demand?

Are you counting on your own ability, your own adequacy, your talent, your personality? Is that what you are reckoning on, in order to accomplish what is expected of you? Well, if you are reckoning on anything other than the activity of God at work in you, you are a legalist! ... The most widespread form of legality in the Christian Church is the flesh, trying to do something before God, which will be acceptable to Him.

In order to recognize what legalism is, we must first determine what true Christianity is. Christianity “is to manifest genuinely Christ-like behavior by dependence on the working of the Spirit of God within, motivated by a love for the Glory and honor of God. True Christian life, is fulfilling a law, by means of a unique power, because of an overwhelming desire. It requires an outward standard or code of behavior, and inward power, which makes it possible to meet it, and a motive which drives us on to do so.”

Legality, on the other hand, “is a mechanical and external behavior, growing our [sic] of reliance on self, because of a desire to gain a reputation, display a skill, or satisfy an urge to personal power. . . . It is religious performance, scrupulous and meticulous in its outward form, but inwardly, as Jesus described it, ‘filled with dead men’s bones.’ ”

Many believe, that to avoid legalism, one must be an anti-nomianist (a person without any law). Nothing is further from the truth. Neither will the casting off of standards, free one from legalism. Legalism is not the establishing of standards, where the Bible does not address an issue. One must establish standards, or limitations for themselves. If one has a problem with playing tennis because it takes up too much of the time they should be spending with God, they might want to make a standard for themselves, that they will not play tennis. It’s not that the game of tennis that is evil, but the individual gets addicted to the game and loses self-control, allowing priorities to be mismanaged. This limitation might change when they mature as a Christian and can play the sport again, in moderation.

On the flip-side of the coin, it is legalism to establish standards for other people, when the Bible does not address the issue. Even standards for one’s self, can be dangerous, if they have the wrong standard. It is possible to be legalistic in the standards you set for yourself. Legality then becomes, a “making [of] unwarranted demands on yourself or on someone else, especially in areas which are not prohibited, in the Scriptures.”

There are some things that are black and white in the Scriptures, but others are

differing shades of gray. Those areas that are black and white, must be preached, and preached hard! Even though the Bible is dogmatic on many subjects, there are other subjects, in which, it is not. There are some things in which “we are given a great deal of personal liberty, and it is legalism, to make standards (particularly, for someone else), in these areas.” It is legalism, when a Christian or group of Christians make rules for everybody else to obey. If others want to do the same things as a particular Christian group, having the same convictions as they, that is great. If, however, they are being forced to do something against their will, or without understanding, it is legalism. It becomes legality, when we make unwarranted demands upon others, in areas not prohibited by Scripture.

Daniel Segraves wrote concerning legalism:

Essentially, legalism is a reliance upon keeping the strict letter of a law as being meritorious, even apart from faith. As legalism is worked out, it is often expressed in an exaltation of human traditions to a status, equal to or superior to, God’s commandments or in a slavish adherence to a specific rule, while failing to note the principle behind the rule and to apply it, in similar situations. While the attractiveness of legalism, for many people, rests in its deceptive promise of assurance of salvation in return for perfect obedience, what it actually produces, is fear, condemnation, guilt, and uncertainty. This is because the legalist’s faith is misplaced. It is in himself and his ability to adhere to a code of behavior, rather than in Christ.

“Legalism means, strict or excessive conformity to a legal code or set of rules. In a Christian context, legalism has two negative connotations: (1) attempting to base salvation on the performance of good works or on the strict observance of rules and regulations and (2) imposing rules on self and others, that are not based on clear Biblical teachings or principles. We are guilty of legalism, if we imply, that a person attains salvation by his works or if we preach rules without principles.” In fact, the basis upon which the legalist usually justifies his beliefs and practices, is mere tradition and authority.

One of the fundamental flaws of a legalistic individual, is his/her view of God's law. The law of God, is not some external code, that God keeps or has made up, specifically for mankind. Neither is God's law arbitrary. He does not simply, decide to approve of this and condemn that. Rather, God's law flows from God's nature. It is a portrait of God's person. When we obey God's law, we are not merely keeping a code of conduct, but relating to God Himself. The law has no inherent value or dignity, apart from God. When we keep or break God's law, we are relating to God Himself. Sin is not merely the breaking of a law, but transgressing against the very nature of God, thus creating a personal attack on God Himself. Thus, legalism -- the idea that the law should be obeyed for its own sake -- is unacceptable. The law, is a means of relating to a personal God. When we relate to the law, as a separate entity apart from God's essential being and nature, we have entered the arena of legalism.

Paul warned about an ascetic legalism, that was attacking the first-century Church in Colossians 2:18-23. He said, that one could be cheated out of their reward, in Christ, by four things. These four things were (1) false, or voluntary humility, (2) worshipping of angels, (3) not giving Jesus His proper place, as the Head of the body of Christ, (4) and "subjecting one's self to human commandments and doctrines, which teach that there is a Spiritual benefit in abstaining from perishable created things, which are not inherently evil." These things do have an appearance of true wisdom, but it is merely, a self-imposed religion, that is not able to help a person overcome their sinful nature (Colossians 2:23). The humility and worship that these ascetics were performing, were not from God, but came from their own human will, contrary to what Jesus taught concerning the worship of God. He said, worship was to come from one's Spirit (John 4:24).

This passage makes it clear, that anything we abstain from or partake of, in this physical world, should aid us in overcoming the sinful nature and bring us closer to God. If this is not the design behind our actions, then it is probably legalism and obedience to it should not be commanded to anyone seeing it, as only a man-made rule. If one

believes that this man-made, self-imposed, false humility and religion, can grant them Spirituality, Holiness, or favor with God, they will lose their reward in Christ.

What kind of legalism is attacking the Apostolic faith today? The most common form, is that which leads “the believer away from absolute reliance upon Christ, toward a self-confidence, based on his ability to do or to abstain from certain things not specifically commended or prohibited, in Scripture.” Concerning this type of legalism, Daniel Segraves comments:

But, the second form of legalism is more subtle, more difficult to detect and resist, and more apt to find acceptance among believers of every age, because it adapts itself cleverly to any culture and time. This is the system that makes one’s interpretation or application of Scripture, equal in authority to Scripture itself. Every ascetic practice can, for example, be defended by general Scriptural calls to devotion, commitment, and Holiness. Even resistance to technological advances can be justified by appeals to disassociate ourselves from the world. This can be witnessed among the communities springing from the Anabaptists traditions, which repudiate zippers, electricity, automobiles, and other modern inventions.

Legalism teaches a salvation that is based upon human works instead of God’s Grace. This type of theology usually develops from a misunderstanding of how and where works fit into the born-again life. Legalism is a mentality, that leads to a way of life, which leads to doctrines not found in the Bible, which leads to a reliance upon one’s performance, instead of Jesus’ performance at Calvary for salvation, which leads to Spiritual death.

The problems with legalism are endless. The worst problem, is the eternal factor. If one relies upon their own works for salvation, they will not make it to heaven no matter how moral they are, seeing that they are going about to establish their own righteousness instead of relying upon the righteousness and Grace of God (Galatians 2:21; 5:1-4). Salvation only comes by faith in Jesus’ work at Calvary. One can not have

faith in Jesus' work and their own, at the same time.

David Bernard commented on the difficulties of a legalistic system by saying:

Furthermore, those who follow a legalistic leader, will eventually begin to doubt the validity of the system, because of its harsh and arbitrary rules. As children grow up in the system, they begin to question the rules. When new converts enter the system, they often accept everything uncritically, but sooner or later, they too, begin to analyze the rules.

If a Church is founded on true Scriptural principles, it will withstand scrutiny of its teachings. The legalist, however, usually gives no justification for his man-made rules, except tradition and authority.

“This is what our Church believes, and you must obey the Church. This is what the pastor teaches, and you must obey the pastor.” This kind of teaching will not be successful in developing true Holiness.

Particularly, in our questioning age, it simply does not work. People today, are more sophisticated and educated than ever before. There is a greater willingness to challenge tradition and authority. Autocratic methods that people sometimes accepted, in the past, are less effective today. Furthermore, as the Church enters an era of great revival, it must be prepared for the influx of thousands of new converts.

If it relies on tradition and legalism, the new converts will either, overwhelm it or fall away. If it teaches Biblical principles of Holiness, the new converts will embrace them, as their own beliefs.

Legalists always exhibit certain characteristics. Among the many, they exhibit periods of great highs and lows, based upon their performance, frustrations with trying to become more Holy, contentious, condemnatory towards others who don't do as they

do, a lack of patience with others growing in Holiness, and usually, like to control others.

Legalism is not teaching against separation from the world. Rather, it is believing that you can be saved from doing so. The Bible teaches us to be Holy. If teaching separation from the world is legalism, then God is the best legalist! It is God who said, that friendship with the world, is enmity against Him (James 4:4). It is God's Word, that tells us that true religion is to keep oneself unspotted from the world (James 1:27). It is the Word of God, that declares if you love the world, then you do not love God (1 John 2:15-16). If you do not love these commandments, you do not love God. One will not find antinomianism in the Bible.

The legalist and a true Holy man or woman of God may have the same "works," but they both have different understandings and perspectives of how and where their works fit into their salvation. The legalist believes his works earn or keep his salvation, while the Holy man or woman of God understand, that they are living the way they do *because* they are saved. They just want to please their Lover. As Stedman said, "That is why, in any Christian activity, you have to be careful that your inner reliance is on God and not upon yourself. Otherwise, it comes out all wrong and makes all the difference between, heaven and hell, life and death. You can do exactly the same thing that someone else is doing, and if you do it with a sense of reliance on anything other than the Spirit of God, what they do will bless people, but what you do will curse them."

So what do you do if you realize that you are in bondage to legalism? It is very simple. All you must do is repent for your sin and believe that God's Mercy has forgiven you, and that His Grace will help you live above this vise. Repent and believe. It seems too easy to be real, but it is the way that God has established. You can not work to please God, so why not just give up and allow God to justify you by your faith and trust in Him!

Footnotes

1. Stedman, Ray C., *Legalism* (Palo Alto, CA: Discovery Publishing, 1995).
2. Segraves, Daniel L., *Collected Writings* (Stockton, CA: n. p., 1992), p. 63.
3. Bernard, David K., *Practical Holiness: A Second Look* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1985) p. 33-34.

What Legalism Is and Is Not

There are different aspects to, or different manifestation of, legalism. The following are the most notable:

1. A reliance on one's own performance to merit favor before God, rather than relying on Christ's performance, at Calvary, on their behalf.
2. Relating to God, on the basis of works, rather than on the basis of faith, (an extension of the former).
3. Confusing personal convictions/persuasions with Biblical mandates, ascribing equal authority to both categories.
4. Enforcing extra-Biblical moral standards on other Christians (an extension of point 3).

The difference between the 3rd and 4th form of legalism, could be summed up as "private vs. public." The 3rd form of legalism, is when one is personally confused, not able to distinguish the difference between the Biblical commands and personal convictions/persuasions. The 4th form of legalism, is an extension of the 3rd, manifested when the individual suffering from the 3rd form, turns his personal confusion into a public mandate, requiring all saints within his authority/influence, to abide by his

extra-Biblical standards.

Examples of Legalism

Most of us are familiar with the famous comic, Jeff Foxworthy. While he has his famous redneck test (“you might be a redneck if...”), I have my not so famous legalist test (“you might be a legalist if...”). Here are some illustrations of the four types of legalism named above:

1. If you think you must become good enough, or do a certain number of good works, in order to be saved and/or maintain your salvation status with God....you might be a legalist. If, when you sin, you feel as though you cannot come before God, until you have met some sort of probationary period to regain your worthiness....you might be a legalist.

2. If, when you think about the way God sees you, you can only think of your good or bad works, rather than thinking about your acceptance before God in Jesus Christ....you might be a legalist.

3. If you elevate Christian traditions (particularly, moral traditions) to a status, on par, with the teaching of Scripture itself....you might be a legalist.

4. If you require others to live in the same manner as you do, and yet, you cannot find the behavior you are prescribing or prohibiting in Scripture....you might be a legalist.

Legalism is a Universal Tendency of Mankind

Legalism is common to us all in one degree or another, because it is consistent with man’s nature. We want to do everything on our own; i.e., we are self-sufficient. This is even evident, in toddlers, who commonly say, “I do it!!!, I do it!!!” with great anger and vigor, when mom or dad try to do something for them. Human beings like being in

control. That's why we rebelled against God to begin with. We didn't want God to hold that place of authority over us. So, when it comes to good works, we look at them, as the way in which we can control our salvation. If we are bad, we forfeit salvation; if we are good, we earn it.

That is why the message of salvation, by faith in Christ, apart from good works, is so difficult for us to accept. We want to be able to have some control over our salvation, to make some sort of contribution, as it were, and yet, the Gospel says, "Christ did it all, and there's nothing more you can add to it. You must accept what

Christ did for you on your behalf, or you will die in your sins." That's why Paul noted in Galatians 5:3-4, that if you trust in your works (circumcision, in the case of the Galatians), Christ will profit you nothing. He said, that those who trusted in their works (circumcision) had fallen from Grace. How? It was because they were trusting in what they could do, working for a reward (salvation), rather than trusting in what God did for them and accepting salvation, as the unmerited free gift of God that it is. Those with a legalistic mentality forget, that God justifies the ungodly (Romans 4:5), thinking rather, that they must become godly, before God will accept them.

Works (in the sense of doing good things, with the idea that by doing such, you will earn your favor before God, not in the sense of obedience to God's commands out of a love for Him and in appreciation of His act of salvation, on our behalf), are opposed to Faith/Grace. They are antithetical. It is like hot and cold water. You can get both out of the same faucet, but not at the same time. If you are using cold water, you cannot get hot water. If you are using hot water, you cannot get cold water. Likewise, if you are relating to God on the basis of your works, you cannot receive Grace. But, if you are relating to God on the basis of your faith, there is no room for works. Works require a reward. Grace does not. We cannot be saved by our works, because that is not the way salvation comes to man. It comes as a free gift, only. But, you cannot give a gift to someone who has earned it (Romans 4:1-8). So, when one works for their salvation, God cannot give them salvation, because His salvation is free, not a reward for good

behavior. That is why there can be no Grace, in the presence of works. To rely on one's own performance for their justification, before God, is to fall from Grace.

Obedience is Not a Work

Building on my disclaimer in the above paragraph concerning works, many people misunderstand the Biblical meaning of "works." Too often, in Evangelical circles, it is interpreted to mean, "anything we (have to) do." This is not true. A more precise definition, would be "anything we (have to) do *to earn our salvation.*" The key word, is "earn." This misunderstanding can result in some pretty messed up teachings. For example, the Bible seems pretty clear, that baptism is part of salvation (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21), because it involves the remission of sins and death to sin's dominion over our lives (Romans 6). It accomplishes a Spiritual reality, and is not just a public confession of faith, in Christ. Yet, some theologians will do some fancy exegetical gymnastics to get around the clear teaching of Scripture, in this regard, because they reason that if baptism is necessary for salvation, to be baptized is to do something that affects our salvation, making baptism a work. Since Scripture is clear, that we are not saved by works, they conclude, that baptism is not part of salvation. That is what happens when a work is defined as anything we do. But, using this un-Biblical definition of works would not only make baptism a work, but would make repentance a work, as well, because it is something that we have to do, as well. But, if repentance is a work, salvation becomes impossible.

But pointedly, some Evangelicals have confused works with obedience. We need only ask ourselves, "Who is doing the work in repentance and baptism? Is it us, or is it God?" Clearly, it is God. What do we do? We just make a decision to turn our lives around and confess our sins, and a decision to get in a tub of water. We are simply being obedient to His Word. We are not contributing anything to our salvation. We are merely, putting ourselves in the place where God can give us His salvation freely. That is why Paul spoke of the "obedience of faith" (Romans 1, 16). True faith leads to obedience, but that obedience is not a work, because the obedience itself, does not

earn us anything. Clearly, when we repent and get baptized, we are contributing nothing to our salvation. There is no work involved, only obedience. God is the one performing the Spiritual work. Using the common definition of “works” and applying it consistently, would lead us to conclude, that we don’t have to repent, be baptized, or obey any commandment found in Scripture. Clearly, such is not the case. When we repent, God is the one forgiving us. When we are baptized, God is the one performing the Spiritual work. When we live right we do so, only because God gives us the Grace to do so, and out of love for the God who saved us. It is only if we are being obedient with the idea that our obedience demands, that God reward us with salvation are our works, “works” in the Biblical sense of the Word.

Conservatism is not Legalism

Another thing Christians often confuse, is conservatism for legalism. This is unfortunate. There is a difference between a morally conservative individual and a legalistic individual, although to most Christians, they are one and the same. The difference is not in their actions, per se, but in how they think about their actions (mentality). The legalist thinks his right behavior grants him favor, before God, that He otherwise would not have had, or he thinks his right behavior can keep him saved. A morally conservative individual understands, that no amount of good works can earn one favor with God, and that no one can do good works without the Grace of God, but also understands, that we are to do good works, because we have been saved (Eph. 2:9-10). For this individual, good works are an act of love toward a gracious God, because we have been saved by Him, not personal achievements that we must meet, in order to be saved.

There is no question, that we must be Holy, and that Holiness applies to every area of our lives. Too many Christians, however, fail to apply Biblical Holiness principles to their lives, consistently. They do not apply them, when it comes to where they go, what they say, what they watch, what they listen to, what they do, how they look, etc. When

they encounter other Christians, who are concerned about those areas and are applying Biblical principles to the same, it is easy to label them, as legalists, or simply, as conservatives, and have sort of a disdain for them, as though they are too radical. I do not think these people are all that conservative, or too radical. I think the majority of us are simply, too laxed, when it comes to being Holy. Those we often look at as conservatives or ultra-conservatives, are simply being consistent in their Holiness, not relegating it to certain parts of their lives, while ignoring the application of Holiness, to others. But, when you are on the far left, those on the right, look like they are far, far, away, even if they are only moderately, to the right!

I do not think we can be too conservative, when it comes to Biblical morality and applying Biblical principles to every part of our lives. I am not opposed to ultra-conservatives, in the least. What I am opposed to, are conservatives turned legalists, damning and condemning everyone, who does not do as they do. That is when it turns ugly, and when the title of "legalist," is justified.

As long as what we are doing is unto the Lord, it is a good thing. Even if something is not technically a sin in God's eyes, what matters is that the person who refrains from doing whatever it is that they think is wrong, is refraining from doing it, as unto the Lord. That's what matters-not whether they are right or wrong, per se, (see Romans 14; 1 Cor. 8, 10). They are doing it for His sake, trying to please Him, and such an attitude is pleasing to God. Conservatism, or ultra-conservatism only becomes bad, when we think that our works can bring us salvation, or when we impose our extra-Biblical persuasions on others, or judge those who do not line up with our own personal moral standards.

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