



Part 8: *Girls Gone Mild*

This is a passage that has been badly handled in the church.

-- Gordon D. Fee, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*

This passage, with its hierarchical ordering of male and female, has had a fateful influence through the centuries and has not enhanced Paul's reputation. At least we can see that Paul takes it for granted that both genders will participate in the important acts of church leadership, such as prayer and prophecy.

-- John Barclay, *The Oxford Bible Commentary*

Although various Christian groups have fostered the practice of some sort of head covering for women in the assembled church, the difficulties with the practice are obvious. For Paul the issue was directly tied to a cultural shame that scarcely prevails in most cultures today.

-- Gordon D. Fee, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*

The underlying point seems to be that in worship it is important for both men and woman to be their truly created selves, to honour God by being what they are and not blurring the lines by pretending to be something else. God's creation needs humans to be fully, gloriously and truly human, which means fully and truly male and female.

-- N.T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone*

Here we see that Paul believes that the Holy Spirit's dispensing of gifts determines many if not most functions in the body of Christ. And there is no gender-specific dispensing of those gifts.

-- Ben Witherington III, *Conflict & Community In Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*

While Paul's specific instructions may be cultural (women covering their heads in worship), the principles behind his specific instructions are timeless.

-- Linda K. Taylor, *Life Application Commentary*

We need to remember that Paul is not giving a rule that is universally binding. But the principle underlying his ruling applies to all cultures and all times. The basic question is, what glorifies God within one's local setting?

-- Dacholom Datiri, *Africa Bible Commentary*

Paul seems to recognize that there will always be some interaction between gospel and culture, and he even boldly do-opts cultural elements where he thinks they may be helpful to him. There will always be accommodation to the culture and its practices, and there will be distancing from the culture and its patterns.

-- J. Paul Sampley, *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary*

Paul's point is that our behaviours are not merely a matter of personal preference (as is often thought in our contemporary Western world) but are lived out in a community context, and so the well-being of the community must play an integral role in our decisions regarding the attitudes and postures we assume with respect to those around us.

-- D. A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary*

For Paul, community is primary and what is good for community should guide conduct.

-- Ben Witherington III, *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*

Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him?

-- The Apostle Paul