



God's Divine Design Under Attack – Part 2
Various Scriptures
GCSP – 07/19/2008

No other writer of the New Testament has been attacked as much as the Apostle Paul; partly because he wrote almost half of it but also because of the words he has written. Hopefully everyone here understands that it really was not the Apostle Paul but the Holy Spirit who did the writing, but the fact remains that Paul has been attacked through the centuries.

Unfortunately, much of the attacks in recent decades have come from within the church as opposed to outside the church. Specifically many attacks have come from a group known as evangelical feminists, and those who are sympathetic to their cause. They charge that Paul was a male chauvinist and that he frequently taught his own prejudices instead of God's Word.

As I mentioned last week, the most aggressive attack of recent history on God's divine design began to take root in the sixties. Back then it was called the women's liberation movement but today it is more widely known as feminism. And again, do not blame the female sex alone for the onslaught of feminism. Men have been overstepping their biblical bounds in how they have treated women through the centuries as much or more so that women have been overstepping theirs. The bottom line is Satan and his demons are at the core; men and women have simply been willing pawns in this evil game.

The main agenda of feminism is to totally eliminate the God-designed and God-ordained differences between men and women.

Last week I made a profound statement: Men and women are different. It is no surprise to men and women who know their Bibles that men and women are different by design, but it apparently has been a surprise to those who have been pushing the feminist agenda for the last several decades.

I read portions of several magazine and newspaper articles along with a few excerpts from a few books to drive home the point that even the secular media has documented the utter failure of feminism; yet still it persists.

Satan's goal from the start was to overthrow God's design for His elect. Scripture is very clear in defining the God-designed roles of men and women in society, in the family, and in the church. We primarily looked at passages in the Book of **Genesis** to begin building the biblical basis for God's divine design for men and women. First, we noticed that God created both man and woman in His image. One is not superior and one is not inferior to the other. Secondly, we saw that God blessed them as man and woman. The man and the woman were coregents; they were both given the task to rule together over God's creation.

We saw that God not only created man first, He created him in an entirely different manner than He did the woman. Man was created from the dust of the ground. Man was made from dirt, but woman was created from man. Adam immediately recognizes that Eve is his perfect companion. He did not see any blemishes or shortcomings in her, because both her character

and his attitude were pure. There was nothing to criticize in Eve and there was no critical spirit in Adam.

Turn with me in your Bibles to **Genesis 2**.

Genesis 2:18; 20

I spent some time on two words found in both of these verses. The first is **helper**, or help-meet, or help-mate, as some translations put it; and the second is the word **suitable**.

We looked at several verses in the Psalms, and we could have gone to many others as well, that use the same Hebrew word for helper, only in each of these verses the helper was the Lord. And I concluded from these other contexts that being a helper is actually an unimaginable privilege. God declared you ladies, to be the helper; and He holds this role in such high esteem that He refers to Himself in the same way.

We also found that the word suitable means to be a compliment or a completion. To be suitable is to complete what was lacking and make it whole.

So being a suitable helper is an immensely important role and has absolutely no negative connotations from the original intent of God.

Man was given the headship in the relationship, but in a pure and God-designed relationship, that headship will manifest itself out of a consuming love to the woman God has provided to you, and her submission to your authority will be manifest in a consuming love for the man God has provided for her. No selfishness or self-will should mar the marriage relationship; each should live for each other in perfect fulfillment of their created purpose under God's provision and care. A man, just by the virtue of his manhood, is called to lead for God. A woman, just by the virtue of her womanhood, is called to help for God.

We then briefly looked at the original sin of Adam and Eve and how the curse for sin works against us in our marriage relationships. This curse of marital strife is two-fold. First, since Eve usurped Adam's authority women are now cursed to always desire that authority over their husbands. The word translated as desire means a desire to control not a physical or sexual desire. The second aspect of this curse is that the man will rule over the wife. And in this context it is not the beauty of his God-ordained headship but that he will have a great tendency to abuse his headship in a self-serving way.

Women have a sinful inclination to usurp man's authority and men have a sinful inclination to put women under his feet.

So where do we go and what do we do to counteract this curse and get back to experiencing what God created and designed almost 6,000 years ago? Are we doomed to live with marital strife? Should we just throw up our hands and succumb to the false notion that all marriages have their share of fights and arguments?

Before I try to answer these and other questions, let's pray.

Although we saw last week that God created authority and submission, and God designed the roles that men and women possess still today, we probably need to spend some more time defining what true biblical authority and submission is. Just like every other truth of Scripture, Satan has perverted these concepts beyond recognition and the church has willingly adopted many of his perversions in place of God's Word.

Evangelical feminists have to make a choice: Believe in the inerrancy and infallibility of God's Word or compromise it through false methods of interpretation.

Turn with me in your Bibles to **1 Corinthians 11**.

1 Corinthians 11:3-16

Now, before you allow your minds to drift, contemplating why Paul spends so much time talking about hair and head coverings, let's take it a step at a time in regards to the primary point of this passage; which is authority and submission. The rest is simply an illustration Paul uses that had more specific meaning to the culture of his day, which I will explain in few moments. The city of Corinth was vile and wicked. We tend to think that our cities are morally worse than the cities of ancient or olden times, but as Solomon so appropriately teaches us, in the Book of Ecclesiastes, there is nothing new under the sun.

The Corinthian Church faced the same twisting and misunderstanding of the male/female roles in their society that we face today. Some of the ancient feminists of the Roman and Corinthian world would join the men in their hunts for wild game, "*with spear in hand and breasts exposed*" as one ancient writer records. He went on to write, "*What modesty can you expect in a woman who wears a helmet, (denies) her own sex, and delights in feats of strength?*"

In Corinth, women demanded the same treatment as men. They resented bearing children for fear it would spoil their looks. Asserting their independence they left husbands and homes and refused to care for the children they did have. They wore men's clothing, they wore men's hairstyles, and they discarded all signs of femininity. As I mentioned before, the rise of feminism in that time has its roots in how women were generally treated; it was in essence a revolt from the inhumane way men treated them.

Women were nothing more the disposable slaves in that culture and in many cultures still today. Men could do with them as they pleased and there was no legal recourse. In the midst of this insanity Paul addresses the issue of authority and submission, using some of the practical and cultural abuses of that day as his illustrations.

v. 3

Paul starts as we should all start in any controversy; by stating the principles of God's Word. Paul doesn't open by commanding the women to submit or by commanding the men to straighten up. Instead he simply states the facts of how God has designed our roles; the logic of which will cause all involved to stop and think.

By making this statement Paul is showing us that aside from authority and submission everything falls apart.

- If Christ had not submitted to God the redemption and salvation of mankind would have been impossible.
- If men and women do not submit to Christ as Savior and Lord they will be doomed forever for rejecting God's gracious provision.
- If women do not submit to men the family and society as a whole will be destroyed. Submission and authority, whether on a divine scale or a human scale, are indispensable elements in God's order and design. We simply cannot pick and choose the tenets of Scripture that we like and agree with. We all must submit in many ways. We cannot enjoy the benefits of Christ submitting to the Father's will and at the same time reject His command for us to submit to Him and to each other.

In **Ephesians 5:21**, before Paul gives us his great passage on the relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children, and masters and slaves, he states, "**Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.**" The term, "**be subject**" comes from a military sense of "to rank under." It expresses relinquishing your rights to the authority of another. Paul later tells the Corinthian believers to be subject to their faithful pastors and elders. Peter tells all of us to be subject to every human institution, meaning the governmental authorities.

One of the books I am using as a resource in this series makes the following assertion: "*A nation cannot function without rulers, soldiers, police, and others in leadership. That's not to say they are inherently superior to other citizens, but leaders are necessary for maintaining law and order to prevent the nation from falling into a state of anarchy.*"

Likewise there is a biblical mandate for leadership and authority in the church. Speaking of the relationship between the pastors and elders, and the members of the church, **Hebrews 13:17** says, "**Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable to you.**" In other words, God knows we will have great tendency to rebel against authority, and in our fleshly state we will indeed rebel, but individually you will suffer the consequences for that rebellion. God-ordained leadership from godly men should be a source of great joy, not a source of grief.

And just like the statement I read from one of the books I am using as a reference tool, godly church leaders are not inherently superior to any other Christian. But no institution, including the church, can operate and function without a system of authority and submission. The same principle applies to the home. No one is inherently superior to the others but the household, or family, or marriage, will not stand or survive apart from authority and submission.

The word translated "**head**" in **verse 3** means "authority over." Paul gives us three examples in which this "authority over" is manifested.

1. The Authority of Christ

Jesus Christ is the authority over every person – believer and unbeliever alike. In **Matthew 28:18** Jesus states, "**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.**" Jesus paid for that authority with His own blood. Those who willingly submit to that authority are the true church, and those who rebel against His authority are the unbelieving and lost world. So in regards to all of us, not just the ladies, when we rebel against the authority that God has designed and commanded, we are aligning ourselves with Satan's kingdom and the unbelieving

world. When we willingly submit to God-ordained authority we are aligning ourselves with Jesus Christ and the true children of God.

2. The Authority of the Man

Paul makes no distinctions between men and women in regards to their abilities, intellect, maturity, or spirituality. Some women are obviously far superior to some men in one or more of these areas. The God-ordained authority that men have over women has absolutely no connotation that man is superior to woman. It simply does not exist.

Hold your place in **1 Corinthians** and turn with me in your Bibles to **Galatians 3**.

Galatians 3:23-28

Their oneness in Christ did not obliterate the distinctions between them. Jews remained Jews, Gentiles remained Gentiles, slaves remained slaves, free men remained free men, males remained males, and females remained females. The point in this passage is that no one is inherently superior to another and that we are all equal in our relationship to Christ if you have come to faith in Him. But that faith does not eliminate our God-designed and God-ordained differences.

In recognizing that believing women as the full spiritual equals of believing men, Christianity elevated women to a status they had never known before in the ancient world. In matters of the marriage, the home and the church, God established the headship of men, but in matters of spiritual possessions and privilege, there is absolutely no difference.

An employee may have more intellect, more skill, more business sense, more competence, and more understanding than his or her boss, but a company or an office cannot be run without submission to proper authority. Church leaders should be chosen from among the most spiritual men in the congregation. Other men in the church may indeed be even more spiritual but if they are to be obedient to the Word of God they should submit to those who are in authority. A church may have some women who are better students of the Bible, better theologians, and even better speakers than many of the men in the church, but if the women are going to be obedient to the Word of God they will submit to male leadership and not usurp it.

Turn back in your Bibles to **1 Corinthians 11**.

3. The Authority of God

Jesus Christ has never been – before, during, or after His incarnation – inferior in essence to God the Father. But He willingly submitted Himself to the Father.

We cannot separate these three aspects of submission and authority. Just as Christ is submissive to God the Father, men and women are submissive to Christ, and women are submissive to men. One part cannot be rejected without rejecting the other parts. Anyone rejecting the principle of a woman's submission to a man must reject Christ's submission to the Father and believer's submission to Christ.

But each of these acts of authority and submission are based on love, not tyranny. The Father sent, and Christ submitted out of love. Christ loves the church so much that He gave His life for

us and we should submit to Him out of love. Men, in general, and husbands in specific, should exercise their authority in genuine and self-sacrificing love.

Quickly, let's see how Paul uses some of the cultural issues of his day in the city of Corinth to illustrate his point, and how these cultural issues apply to us today.

v. 4-6

As you will hopefully see throughout the rest of this passage, and yes, I will get through the rest of this passage very quickly, the primary point is for a man to be a man and a woman to be a woman. One of the ways we express this uniqueness is in our appearance. The literal meaning of the phrase "**has something on his head**" is "coming down from his head," and would most likely refer to a veil. Wearing a veil would have been ridiculous for a man but completely appropriate for a woman.

The cultural significance of wearing a veil is really quite beautiful and even romantic – not that I am suggesting you ladies begin wearing veils. The significance is that a married woman reserves her beauty and her charms for her husband only, not willing to expose herself to other men. I think our culture would do well to at least find some middle ground in this respect.

Paul then goes to an extreme to emphasize his point by saying if a woman would refuse to wear a veil she may as well just shave her head. In that culture only the completely rebellious feminists and the prostitutes ever shaved their heads. The point being, if you are not going to submit to having the appearance of a woman in public you may as well take your rebellion to the extreme.

v. 7-10

In the culture of Corinth, the woman's head covering, or veil, was a symbol of her submission to authority. The principle of man's headship is not symbolic but a stated and established fact from God. Since a covered head was a sign of subordination in that culture, Paul instructs the men to not cover their heads in any way.

The main point is again dealing with the fact that God created the roles of men and women, and where it is culturally relevant, a symbol of that authority is important. In the Corinthian culture this symbol of authority actually gave the woman the right to pray and prophesy and worship along with the other believers.

So what do the angels in **verse 10** have to do with all of this? I answer with a question first: What is the primary characteristic or function of angels? God's holy angels are in complete submission to God the Father. They immediately obey His bidding. They are creatures of great power and great authority in their own right, but they submit that power and authority to that of the Father. They are a prime example of submission and authority.

v. 11-12

Satan will entice men to abuse this role so Paul quickly makes the point of our mutual submission to each other. Man's authority over woman is delegated by God for His divine purposes only. As a fellow created being, man has no superiority over woman and absolutely no right to use his authority for his own selfish purposes. Male chauvinism is just as much a perversion of God's Word as feminism is.

v. 13

Paul is telling the Corinthian believers to make the appropriate judgment for the times and culture they live in.

v. 14-15

One of the many ways men and women are different and distinct is in our physiology. The process of hair growth is one of these distinctions. A head of hair has three stages: Formation and growth, resting, and fallout. Testosterone speeds up this process. The reason you rarely see a woman who naturally loses her hair is because she rarely reaches stage three; estrogen causes stage one to last much longer than in men. This distinction is displayed in most cultures as women generally wear their hair longer than men do.

A woman's hair is a special gift to her from God for displaying the softness and tenderness of a woman. It is simply a symbol of the subordination and submissiveness of the woman. This, along with other distinctive feminine customs is a "**glory to her.**" Ladies, I am not telling you that you must wear your hair long to be in obedience to God's Word, but I am saying your hairstyle should be obviously feminine. The way you dress should be feminine. The way you act should be feminine. The way you carry yourself should be feminine. It is God's design and it is your glory to be feminine.

Often you can determine the level of a woman's rebellion simply by how much she adheres to the symbols of masculinity as opposed to femininity.

v. 16

As is the case in almost any age and any church, some of the Corinthian believers were not satisfied with God's design. Paul knew this would be the case and in essence says, "I can't say anything more than I have already said. If you still choose to be rebellious then you will suffer the consequences."

Well, I still didn't answer our questions – maybe next week.

Let's pray.