

GENDER DISTINCTIVES

1 Corinthians 11:2-16

Summary:

Paul insists that gender distinctives need to be maintained within the church.

Difficulties

- We don't know exactly what was happening within the church.
- What Paul prescribes appears counter-cultural.
- The use of certain words.

Context

The Corinthian believers were behaving inappropriately when praying and prophesying during their corporate gatherings.

Order

Verse 3 – *“Now I want you to realise that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”*

- Man is the head of woman.
- God is the head of Christ.

But there are two possible abuses which Paul addresses:

- Female insubordination. (vs 8-10)
- Male arrogance and pride. (vs 11-12)

Catechism: Who created people? *“God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created Him, male and female He created them.”*

It is not good to abandon God's good design. These define roles and responsibilities:

- Man has the primary responsibility for spiritual and physical protection and provision. This will be carried out in a “cross shaped” way.
- The wife should seek her own good by supporting her husband in this.

The Arena

Gender distinctives were being abandoned in corporate worship.

Verse 10, *“For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have **a sign of authority on her head.**”*

The Corinthian believers were casting this off.

The Big Picture

1 Corinthians 11:2-16 instructs us to embrace who God has made us (male or female) and live out that gender distinctives in a culturally appropriate way.

Questions

- Are you following God's good design?
- In what culturally appropriate ways can you demonstrate that?
- Are there areas in which you need to repent and believe the good news of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16?