

## 1 Cor 11.2-16 Respect

### Words with multiple meanings

#### “Man” and “woman”

In Greek, the language that the New Testament was originally written in, the words “man” and “woman” also mean “husband” and “wife.” Everywhere Paul uses these two words together, the New International Version of the Bible translates them as “husband” and “wife,” except here and 1 Timothy 2.12.

#### “Head”

Bible scholars argue back and forth over whether “head” should be understood to refer primarily to “authority” (like the head office of a company) or to “source” (like the head waters of a river.)

### It's all about respect

#### Giving important relationships due respect

Paul's concern here is not primarily about women, it's that everything be done in a way that is appropriate and respectful, because those in leadership set the tone for the whole church.

Our culture defines persons as autonomous individuals. Scripture, and most cultures and societies in the world and throughout history, have defined persons in terms of their relationships.

#### Behaving respectably is important

Every day on the streets of Hamilton you can see women who cover their heads in public to show, within their culture and community, that they are respectable women.

The problem in Corinth wasn't that women were leading in worship. The problem was that they were doing it in ways that were disrespectful, and possibly giving the gospel a bad name.

#### Because how we behave reflects on the gospel

In that culture, if a woman leader didn't cover her head, she was sending the signal that's she's available, which dishonoured her marriage vows to her husband.

We live in a culture that glorifies independence; the right to do what we want, no matter how it affects anyone else. The Bible teaches that we are made for interdependence.

### Avoiding giving the gospel a bad name

Paul's primary concern wasn't really about how women dressed but rather about avoiding giving the gospel a bad name by unnecessarily offending those around them.

How can we conduct ourselves in ways that don't give offense to our neighbours? How can we conduct ourselves so that, if people are going to take offense, it's at Jesus and the gospel, not at my personal preferences and idiosyncrasies?