

# 5.1 For the Glory of Another

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[ 0 : 00 ] So we're going to turn to our Bible reading now. And we've been working through 1 Corinthians on and off over the past year or so.

And we've covered all the way up to the first verse of chapter 11. And that's where we're going to pick up today, spending this week and next week on chapter 11.

But we're going to begin our reading just for a little bit of context from the end of chapter 10, verse 31. So we're going to read 1 Corinthians 10, 31 through to 11, verse 16.

And Paul says, So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God. Just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

[ 1 : 08 ] Be imitators of me as I am of Christ. Now, I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions, even as I delivered them to you.

But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ. The head of a wife is her husband, or perhaps more helpfully as per the footnote.

The head of the woman is man. And the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head.

But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. For if a woman will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short.

But since it is disgraceful for a woman to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God.

[ 2 : 11 ] But woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from women, but woman from man. Neither was man created for women, but woman for man.

That is why a woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, in the Lord, woman is not independent of man, nor man of woman.

For as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. Judge for yourselves.

Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair, it's a disgrace for him? But if a woman has long hair, it's her glory. For her hair is given to her for a covering. If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice. Nor do the churches of God.

[ 3 : 14 ] Well, amen. This is God's word. And we'll return to it again shortly. We'll do turn once again to 1 Corinthians 11.

Have that in front of you. And do follow along. So you can see what this passage is saying. Few things matter more in this world than maleness and femaleness.

If you're a woman, few things matter more than that women are truly women and that men are truly men.

If you're a man, few things matter more than that men are truly men and that women are truly women. Despite much of the intrigue on this passage in years gone by being about whether women should wear hats to church or not, the key concern of this passage is maleness and femaleness. Now, the narrative and the rhetoric today tells us that we mustn't be on the wrong side of history as progress sweeps through, destroying every last remnant of the patriarchy.

[ 4 : 33 ] And indeed, as sex and gender are deconstructed and erased and confused. And that's a powerful narrative in our day. But far more significant for a Christian is to be on the right side of reality.

Knowing that history ebbs and flows and that leaders and nations rise and fall, as do ideologies. Now, Western society, in particular, over the last 60 years or so, has been trying to undermine and taint God's glorious good design, his image, in humanity. Initially, through the rise of feminist ideas that sought to suppress the differences between man and woman. And also today, through the efforts to eradicate even basic biological facts. We've reached the point where politicians can't even answer a question like, what is a woman? And so our passage this morning is utterly contemporary for our day and age. Cutting against the grain of many of the cultural mowers of this world. And before we can dig into these verses themselves, there is a little clearing of the road that's required.

[ 5 : 47 ] Some preliminaries. The first of those is the question, is Paul talking about men and women or husbands and wives? There's one Greek word that means either woman or wife, and one Greek word that means either husband or man.

Most Bibles will tell you that in the footnotes. And I actually think the NIV does this translation better than the ESV which we've read from. Because it translates those two words in the same way throughout.

Simply using man and woman. In translating it consistently, it's not possible to retain wife and husband throughout. Otherwise, verse 12 would tell us absurdly that husband is born of wife. But more than that, as we'll see a little later, Paul roots his argument for this passage in creation itself. And so in view, in the broadest terms in this passage, I think, is the difference between man and woman.

Of course, in a significant way that involves husbands and wives. And applications will land most fully in that relationship. But I think we need to be careful not to narrow our understanding and application of this to just the husband-wife relationship.

[ 7 : 06 ] After all, when Paul wrote this, he was comfortable to leave it ambiguous to the Corinthians. Perhaps because in Paul's world, there wasn't as much of a gap or distinction between man and husband and woman and wife as we might perceive today.

That's the first preliminary. The second, does the covering here mean hair or some sort of hat? Countless pages have been written on head coverings and what they are.

Some argue that Paul is talking about hair when he says head covering because verse 15, he mentions hair as a covering. But verse 6 becomes rather difficult if Paul means only hair because he'd be saying, if you won't cover your head with hair, then you should be shaven.

Now, the best we can work out from history is that it's likely that Paul is referring to some kind of shawl that wrapped around the top of the head, perhaps even a veil.

I don't think we need to get caught up in this because the easy thing to do here is to make this passage all about hat wearing. And so pop on a hat or something similar and think we've ticked the box of obedience to this passage.

[ 8 : 22 ] We've got 1 Corinthians 11, kneel down, hat on, move on. But there's a problem for us here. In our day and age, wearing a head covering doesn't mean what it meant then.

Claire Smith is a scholar who's written on these things. And she says, the fact is there's no piece of clothing that functions as a cultural equivalent to the first century Greco-Roman covering.

Then a head covering communicated that I'm happy to be a married woman and to accept the order and authority that God's pattern of relationships gives to my husband.

Making this passage all about the hat is to miss the point. Second preliminary.

Final one. We must ask how this passage fits in with the same old Corinthian issue that we've been seeing play out throughout this letter. The key to understanding this passage is found in how Paul talks about that very Corinthian word.

[ 9 : 34 ] Glory. Glory. Remember, Corinth loves glory, strength, and wisdom. That's the very heart of the Corinthian disease. They want the crown, but not the cross.

And notice the context our passage is set in that we read from. 1031. Whether you eat or drink, or in whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Paul doesn't seek his own advantage, but that of the many, that they may be saved. And so he says to imitate him. And so as we approach this passage, which in so many ways is a difficult passage, just note that we will find ourselves in danger of being forever on the wrong side of reality if we feel to grasp that we are all, every single one of us, made for the glory of someone else.

And so the first thing we see in our passage is dishonorable disorder. Verses 2 to 6. Dishonorable disorder.

When God's created order is abandoned, confused, or minimized, it will lead only to our detriment and disgrace. Men and women are different, discernibly different, different by design.

[10:59] And that's a good thing. Verse 3 is the key to this whole passage. It makes clear God's ordering. Look at it.

Paul says, I want you to understand something. First and foremost, this is about understanding. It's about theology. It's about truth. Paul doesn't simply say, someone should wear hats, and men shouldn't.

This whole issue is about something so much more profound. Paul says, I want you to understand, verse 3, that the head of every man is Christ, the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

Now, what's meant by that word head? There are two popular understandings of what Paul means here. First, that it speaks of authority over, like the head teacher or the head of a department.

Or that head means source, like the head of a river. Both of these ideas are presently drawn in this passage. We can see authority in verse 10, and we can see the source idea in verse 8.

[12:13] Wayne Grudem, a fairly well-known Bible scholar, has combed through over 2,000 uses of that word from the Bible and from other writings of the time to prove quite conclusively that a sense of authority is always present in the Greek word that's translated head.

We can't get away from that. It's always present. But, Paul doesn't say, the ruler of every man is Christ, and the ruler of women is man.

He says head. And head is a metaphor, isn't it? The most common use is for this. But it's a metaphor that speaks of more than just simple ruler authority.

I think the best illustration is the example of a head of state in a democracy. They rule over us, but also represent us. They have power over us.

They're prominent amongst us as the figurehead that deals with other nations and speaks on our behalf. And they're elected, in theory at least, to see us prosper.

[13:23] And isn't that the picture of what we see in Jesus, the head of every man? The words that began our service this morning from Ephesians speak of Jesus' supremacy, that he was given all things, but also that he was given as head to the church.

Christ's rule, his headship, was not just a thing to be wielded over his people, but something carried out to their great benefit.

And so with that in mind, notice that verse 3 is not a straightforward hierarchy. Notice what Paul doesn't say. He doesn't say, God is the head of Christ, who is the head of man, who is the head of woman.

Look carefully. Christ bookends, verse 3. Christ, the anointed saviour king, who is incarnated amongst us as one of us, for us, he is shown to us both as one who is head and one who has a head.

It's so important for us to see that this is not a straightforward hierarchy, because when we understand that, it stops all kinds of abuses and distortions. This is not a statement about value or worth.

[14:42] It's not a statement to devalue or demean. It's simply a statement of order. A man fulfills his maleness not in using it to subjugate or to demean or to take advantage of.

That couldn't be further from the Lord Jesus. When that is how a man acts, it's a perversion that needs to be stopped. A man is most manly when he takes his ruling representative role and uses it to enrich those under his care, like Christ.

And, in Christ, we also have the model of how to have a head over us. For he was the one who said at the coming prospect of the cross, Abba, Father, all things are possible for you.

Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will. And, strikingly, that's the very cross that is the glory of Christ.

That's the cross that marks Paul's life. That's the cross that Paul is calling the Corinthians and us to embrace as the real path to glory in this life.

[15:55] Submission isn't a shameful, degrading thing. It's not to be fought. The Lord Jesus himself did it and thus was exalted to the highest place.

So, verse 3, in the middle of two statements about Christ is a statement about order in creation. Men and women were not created to be exactly the same.

There is a relational order in creation which brings forth maleness and femaleness. that's the principle that plays out in the rest of this passage. There's a particular responsibility that rests upon men in certain spheres.

The Bible's clear about that for us in the realm of marriage and also in the realm of the church so that in those realms men should step up and not shirk responsibility and so that women should support and not usurp responsibility.

responsibility. And whilst these things are at their clearest and most concrete in the church and in the home, it's equally true that we don't leave our maleness or femaleness at the front door of church or the home.

[17:09] And so I think it's worth us challenging an assumption that's often made here. Is Paul talking about coverings at church on Sundays only? Nearly all the commentators I've read just assume that this passage is all about the public Sunday gathering like us here now.

One at least makes a case to defend that assumption but it's not very convincing. And it fails to notice how Paul is so careful to specify throughout this letter when he's talking about the main gathering of the church.

When Paul moves on later in this chapter to talk about the Lord's Supper from verse 17 there's a clear structural marker that shows a new idea is beginning and look at what it says.

When you come together it's not for the better but for the worse. Indeed the second part of chapter 11 he's very careful to spell out that he's talking about when they come together.

Verse 18 when you come together. Verse 20 when you come together. Verse 33 when you come together. Verse 34 the same. And the same thing happens in chapter 14 when Paul lands his specific teaching about prophecy and tongues he spells out about both that he's talking about when they come together.

[18:28] Back in chapter 5 we saw a few months ago when someone was to be removed from the church it was to happen as they assembled. So Paul is very careful to spell out when he's talking about the main Sunday gathering.

And on top of that the most recent context in the letter where we're at in chapter 10 deals with the marketplace and being in and out of other people's homes for meals.

So I think we have to at least consider that Paul is talking here more broadly than about just the gathering on a Sunday. And because Paul may be talking more broadly than about just the church gathering we need to at least think through what it looks like to maintain God's created order in the world.

In God's grand design for the world men have a prominence of a kind. It's got nothing whatsoever to do with value or worth but to do with role and order.

Look at verse 4. Every man who prays or prophesies with head covered dishonors his head. We don't have time this morning to get into prophesying.

[19:42] We'll get there. That's much more important for chapter 14. Look at verse 5. Every woman who prays or prophesies with head uncovered dishonors her head.

The covering meant something. It communicated something. It communicated God's good order in creation. It communicated verse 3.

It communicated it to the church at prayer as we see in verses 4 and 5. It communicates it to the world. I think that's what verse 6 means. The disgrace of being bald or shaven.

Well that was a common means of exposing adulterers to show their shame. To not be male and female as we're made is to display shame to the world.

And the head covering communicated even to the heavens with the angels of verse 10. We mustn't be ashamed of this good design of our loving God.

[20:44] It wasn't a typo. It wasn't a glitch in God's design. But also this order isn't something simply to affirm. It's something to be embodied and modeled, lived out and practiced.

Notice the key word in verses 4, 5 and 6. Dishonor. Dishonor. Disgrace. God's design and creation isn't arbitrary.

Maleness and femaleness matter. When that order is obfuscated or obliterated, it isn't a sign of ringing triumph or progress. It's warped.

It's shameful. It dishonors us and our heads. But also dishonors our heads from verse 3. Not just this, but the one who's over us.

It cuts against the grain of what we're made to be. When men cease to act as men, when they're passive and idle, when they abdicate, that is to our dishonor and our detriment.

[ 21 : 50 ] When women want to take center stage and outstrip and outdo and elevate themselves at the expense of men, that isn't our success. It's our shame. Where men and women use their God-given maleness and femaleness to complement one another, that's a glorious thing.

And we'll see that in our second point. But when men and women abandon their God-given maleness and femaleness and reverse that order and so place themselves in conflict, it produces either domineering men and dominated women, where the curse of Genesis 3 continues to spiral and there's awful and disgraceful abuse, or it produces disengaged men and disappointed women. Disengaged men who leave voids in families, fatherless children, and all kinds of mess there. They leave a void in the church where there's no lead in ministry and Christian living, and the church shrinks.

And a void of men in society who don't pull their weight and work hard and be productive. And it brings disappointed women who either can't find men fit to marry or end up with weak men who abdicate all responsibility to their wives.

It might seem attractive to have a husband under your thumb, but that is never for the better of a family. Far more women wish their husbands would step up than wish they could take the reins from their husbands.

[ 23 : 25 ] Well, the example Paul uses for showing forth this male-female distinctiveness is in the realm of prayer, both here and later on in verse 13 or 14.

So what should this look like, for example, in a church family prayer meeting? Well, I think our prayer meeting is an encouraging example of this. If you come along on Wednesday, you'll witness it.

There's a healthy balance of male and female in attendance. There's a healthy mix of voices who pray. And without any manufacturing of things, the voices who tend to start off and who tend to step up when there's a void or a silence are usually men.

There's no sense of rivalry, but a genuine unity together in committing our ministries to the Lord, where senior and godly men are observably and instinctively taking the lead in prayer and not in a suffocating way because plenty of women are praying alongside.

It would actually be a very concerning thing for a church. If they lack a distinctive male voice at prayer, whether because of disinterest or dereliction or because they're drowned out by women desperate to be more prominent.

[ 24 : 47 ] Dishonorable disorder then. But when maleness and femaleness complement one another, that is a glory that finds its origin in God himself.

That's our second point. Verses 7 to 12, a glory that finds its origin in God himself. The image of God is revealed in this world through the proper living out of male and female distinctiveness.

And that is a truly glorious thing. Glory is the key word in these verses. Verse 7, man ought not to cover his head since he is the image and glory of God, and woman is the glory of man.

Notice both phrases there talk about glory, but notice too the difference in what Paul says. Women is not the image of man.

We know that well from Genesis that it is man and woman together who are the image of God. So Paul's not saying that woman is lesser than man in that, but notice how Paul spells out that we are all made for the glory of someone else.

[ 25 : 58 ] Man ought not to cover his head, because to do so would be to lower himself from where he's meant to be. Think of it like a head teacher in a school appointing a new teacher, only to find that their latest recruit descends into the class romantics and behaves just as another member of the class.

That is in no way a credit to the head teacher. It dishonors them. Whereas the teacher who embraces the challenge and instills discipline in the class and causes children to be enthused and inspired and develop, well that teacher is the glory of the head teacher by fulfilling the role he's meant to.

The use of the image of God in verse 7 is where Paul begins to draw us very directly to the beginning of Genesis, to our origins in creation.

verse 8, man was not made from women, but women from man. From the very beginning it's been clear, man was the firstborn, man was the one entrusted with the mandate in the garden to fill and subdue, to have dominion.

Man was given an expansive mission to see this world brought under the rule and blessing of God, to extend the bliss of the garden paradise out to the far ends of the earth, to be, to reflect, to extend the glory of God, a task that required initiative and vigor and commitment, not passivity and disinterest.

[ 27 : 34 ] To be a man is not to grasp at the quiet life, the hassle-free life. To be a man is to stride forth, taking and using this life that we have on earth for the glory of God, knowing that each day brings the opportunity to step up once again with whatever creative or productive enterprise that we have, to take initiative for the advancement of the kingdom of God, to be leaders in our families, leaders in our church, and influence the world around for the better, however we can.

That's the glory of manliness. Back to verse 7. Woman is the glory of man, glory of mankind, the crowning glory of creation itself, or to put it another way, woman is the glory of the glory of God. She accentuates that glory. That isn't a diminished thing. If anything, it's a heightened thing. But man and woman's glory will always be bound up together because woman is forever entwined with man because of origin and purpose.

Verse he hits, woman wasn't the firstborn, but was rather taken from man, taken from his side, to forever be at his side.

Verse 9, neither was man created for women, but woman for man. Now, that doesn't mean that woman was made as a plaything for man, a slave, a servant, not at all.

[ 29 : 14 ] In fact, woman was created due to man's lack. He needed a helper. And back in Genesis chapter 2, that is so plain.

Man had begun to exercise dominion. He was busy naming all the animals. He was getting on with subduing and having dominion. And woman shares in those things, helping and carrying them out. But there was one thing that man could not do on his own. He couldn't multiply and fill. Man was not made asexual. Adam didn't need just more Adams running around to do what he was doing. He needed someone like him in the sense that all the animals weren't. But he also needed someone not like him. It's no mistake or coincidence that the various waves of feminism that have risen in the last century were accompanied by heightened pressure for abortion to happen. Babies highlight in a fundamental way the distinctiveness of the sexes but also the interdependence of the sexes at God's hand and by God's gift.

[ 30 : 28 ] That's what verses 11 and 12 are about. As woman is bound up with man because of her origins, so man is now bound up with women because of her birth. Now, it isn't always spoken of like this, but the reality is that having children, pursuing children, is a glorious thing.

It is never to be diminished or ridiculed. For in having children, men and women display their distinctiveness. They partake in God's original commission to fill the earth and they produce someone who will either be the glory of God or the glory of the glory of God as image bearers. And so womanly glory has a motherly flavor. It's nurturing, particularly with your own children if the Lord so blesses you, but motherly beyond that, motherly in the community of faith.

We have many fine examples of that in our church, of women who lavish motherly care on generations of students who pass through release the words, who would be so much the poor without it. Womanly glory is nurturing, it's caring, it's supportive, it's having it as your delight that those who are around you, whether family or church family, are flourishing as much as they can because you enable them to.

And what's more cross shaped than that? Pouring out this life for the benefit of others, what's more like Jesus than that? And so where man ought not to cover his head, where he ought to display and embody maleness, women ought to, verse 10, have a symbol of authority on her head, displaying and embodying femaleness.

[ 32 : 25 ] A question that often comes here regarding authority is whether women should then lead in areas like work or in government. government, and we must be really careful here about harsh conclusions on either side because the Bible doesn't give us specifics here in the same way that it does in the realm of church and family.

So in the workplace, if a woman needs to throw off her femaleness to be the one in charge, for going at womanly nurturing and caring instinct in order to take on that role, then it at least begs the

question as to whether that is closer to the glory of the way God has created us, or closer to the dishonor of removing the distinctiveness of how we were made.

Regarding a female head of state, I don't think the Bible anywhere calls that a sin, but when a country has female prime minister followed by female prime minister followed by female prime minister on repeat, then it likely reveals an unhealthy national drift away from God's creation design. male and female men matter. Now, simple observation tells us the difference of how men and women act relationally, and the difference brings different strengths, complementary strengths. Children get this instinctively, don't they? When a child has lost it and is distraught, daddy won't do. They want mummy. Or I wonder how many of us as men are given debriefs by our wives on the way home about how we've upset someone with something we've said clumsily.

[ 34 : 08 ] Or how common it is for men to be totally unaware of how someone else is feeling, whilst women sense it so very quickly. I heard some research recently that women have between 14 to 16 parts of the brain to evaluate other people's behavior, whereas men have something like 4 to 6.

And that partly explains why it can appear to women that men don't have much to say, and it can appear to men that women have much more to say. I don't know if that research is right or not, but I'm sure it wouldn't surprise many of us if it was right, because we can observe it, can't we?

Women are generally far more relationally attuned. I spent a little time worried that we didn't have enough men on our welcome teams, but I've realized that that's okay.

It generally comes more naturally to women. We've got some fine men on the teams, but many of the real stars on our welcome teams are women. That relational strength is so vital across all spheres, particularly when men relate so awkwardly.

But men generally have the capacity to be unbothered by a lot of things, and can carry on doing the task at hand in spite of what's going on all around them, in spite of how other people are feeling, which can bring a helpful stability.

[ 35 : 34 ] Those observations, that's not to say that all men and all women fit these things exactly, but they're generally observable and aren't to be shunned, but steered into.

Our differences are good things, are glorious things. Well, verse 10 again, we mustn't forget the angels.

What about the angels? We've seen angels come up before in 1 Corinthians, they're watching on in chapter 4 as Paul appears as a spectacle to the world.

They're around again in chapter 6 when Paul makes clear that spirituality is not disembodied, that these bodies that we have are the most spiritual things in this world, and the realm of spirituality is right here.

And I take it here that the angels are watching on, and I think watching on in awe at what they are not. Angels weren't created in the image of God, we were.

[ 36 : 41 ] And so the sexless angels watch on in awe as they see man and woman being what they're made to be. together in cooperation, shining forth the glory of God, not just to this world, but to the heavens from where the angels watch.

Pouring our lives out in the pursuit of someone else's glory, be it the glory of God or the glory of a husband, might not seem like a significant thing in this world. We might be ridiculed for it, but the angels watch on in awe.

Well, finally, Paul says it's important to perceive what is proper. Verses 13 to 16, perceiving what is proper.

It's part of our human nature to find ways of distinguishing between men and women. We know that we're different, and so we will and should look different.

The means of distinguishing differ across all kinds of societies and cultures, but wired into us is the fact of maleness and femaleness, and that is an ought to be visible.

[ 37 : 58 ] That's what Paul finishes here by saying. Verse 13, judge for yourselves. That's not Paul suddenly backtracking as if this doesn't matter and they can choose to listen or not.

He says, judge for yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God uncovered? Is it right for a woman to approach the one in whose image she's made whilst denying that very image within herself?

That's what Paul's saying. Verse 14, does not nature itself tell us that a man wearing long hair is disgracing himself. Now, Paul isn't saying that there's a catalogue somewhere in heaven that determines that some haircuts are in fashion and righteous, and some haircuts are out of fashion

and wicked.

Although sometimes sanctified common sense would say, go and get a haircut. No, Paul is saying human nature tends to find ways of expressing in a proper way what it is to be male and female. And that will differ from culture to culture. But when it's expressed like that, it's a glorious thing. Pardon me.

[ 39 : 25 ] When expressed like that, it's a glorious thing. Leaning into the things that show us to be who we are is glorious. Yes, verse 15, just like the woman's long hair.

So, if the norm of the day is that women wear their hair long, then godly men ought not to. That is more dishonor than glory.

Now, there's a challenge for us here because we live in such a confused age where there's a concerted effort to undermine any distinctions so that all kinds of hairstyles and fashion trends are worn equally by men or by women.

Where distinctions across life are squeezed and blurred. But that's not to happen in the church.

Verse 16, if anyone is inclined to be contentious, to ignore the legitimate displays of males and femaleness, they are out of sync with the churches of God.

I think Paul's point is that propriety dictates that it should be obvious whether one is male or female. Obvious in the way we look, in the things we do, and in how we do things.

[ 40 : 43 ] Or to use a present example, there shouldn't be any need whatsoever for you to have to state what pronouns are fitting for you.

The push to have people do that isn't designed to help distinctions, but blur them. It's an attack on reality, on the image of God manifested in men and women.

Now, this whole area is complex, but vital. So as a church family, let's be having conversations over the lunch table today or in the weeks and months ahead with one another, and wrestling through together how we maintain meaningful displays of our distinctiveness as male and female across all kinds of areas of life.

Thinking through things together like whether our children should play certain sports or have certain hobbies that have traditionally been at the realm of a particular sex.

When we knew that society wants to use these means, and all kinds of others, to blur reality for our children and for us. We need to help each other be clear on how to uphold our distinctiveness as men and women, as the image of God, in a world that is increasingly set on destroying humanity as it's meant to be, to unman man and de-God God.

[ 42 : 10 ] I think there are meaningful things that we want to hold on to in our culture and examples of some of these things. It's good that men are the ones who propose marriage. It's a good thing that fathers give away daughters at weddings.

A woman taking her husband's name is meaningful to show the formation of a new family. That's a family led by the husband. Those are good and right things.

But we also must be careful here not to boil this simply down to the symbols, because that's to narrow what Paul is talking about. Symbols do matter, and they mustn't undermine the reality.

And so let's be talking about those and what it might look like. But the reality is far more important than the symbol. So something of our maleness and femaleness ought to be obvious in the day-to-day of regular life.

Not just in our appearance, but in our appearance. But also in how we relate to people generally. In how we live out our lives in all kinds of ways.

[ 43 : 18 ] As we close. The concern for the people of God is that if we eat or drink or are male or female, in whatever we do, we do all to the glory of God.

His image in us, our maleness and femaleness, matter deeply. They are another means of us embracing the way of the cross. To lay our lives down for others.

Our maleness and our femaleness are given to us for the glory of someone else. So let's use them for that. Let's pray.

Oh Lord. God. God. Why do we need your help in this? More than ever in your, your church needs to be a beacon of light and truth in this world.

God. And so we do ask that you grant us grace and help and wisdom to embrace your glorious good design in our hearts. But also externally in meaningful ways.

[ 44 : 39 ] And to shine it forth to a world that has long lost its way. So help us in this, we pray. And able us to stand against the tide.

And we ask for your help. In Jesus' name. Amen.