

The Doctrine of
Headship



YahsTruth.org

***Yahweh's Philadelphia
Truth Congregation***

Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth. - John 17:17

Introduction

Yahshua the Messiah was a true revolutionary of His time. His teachings reached out, as never before, to people who had been excluded from conventional religion. He was a man of the people who brought the message of repentance to those who needed to hear it the most—sinners. He openly associated himself with people who accepted him and his message regardless of who they were or where they came from. All of this went against the current of mainstream Judaism where it was common practice to be biased against people because of their past sins, associations, or the like. *“While Yahshua was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and 'sinners' came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?' On hearing this, Yahshua said, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”* (Matthew 9:10-13; NIV)

Yahshua set the example for us to follow. He established his ministry by taking the Kingdom message of repentance and truth to those who were religious outcasts. He openly spoke to women, even a Samaritan woman, about salvation. *“When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Yahshua said to her, 'Will you give me a drink?' (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?' (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Yahshua answered her, 'If you knew the gift of Yahweh and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.' 'Sir,' the woman said, 'you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?' Yahshua answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.’”* (John 4:7-14; NIV)

According to the religious beliefs of the Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees, this woman had two strikes against her. First, she was a Samaritan, and second, she was a woman. Those things didn't matter to Yahshua. He openly taught the truth of salvation to all people regardless of ethnicity or gender. His ministry reflects this fact in that there are many women mentioned as His followers. Yahshua probably had as many women disciples as men. In fact, women were the ones who first went to Yahshua's tomb to anoint his body, Matthew 28:1. Many of Yahshua's most dedicated disciples were women.

Yahshua's attitude toward women in general was new and different from what already existed in Judaism. He treated all people, including women, with love and respect. His example was followed by all true worshipers throughout the pages of the New Testament. They treated their spiritual brothers and sisters with respect and dignity. Even though women could not be ordained as apostles or other ordained positions, they still played a very important role in the spread of true worship. With this thought in mind, we will examine the role differences between men and women in regard to the subject of headship.

Yahshua and Headship

In Ephesians, chapter four, the Apostle Paul explains the line of authority that exists within the congregation. He describes the various offices, shows why they are there, and, most importantly, emphasizes that Yahshua is the head of the congregation. *“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare Yahweh’s people for works of service, so that the body of Messiah may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of Yahweh and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Messiah. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into **him who is the Head, that is, Messiah**. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”* (Ephesians 4:11-16)

As head of the body, Yahshua is the one who has established the various positions within his body. It should be noted that the positions of authority within the congregation are gender related. The offices of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers fall under the category of overseers, deacons (servants), and elders. (See 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9 & 1 Peter 5:1-6) These positions are strictly given to male members who meet the specified qualifications.

We learn from Ephesians, chapter 4, that headship relates to the chain of authority within the Body of the Messiah. Yahshua is the Head of the congregation, and as such He has authority over all its members from top to bottom. He has been given this position by our Heavenly Father Yahweh. *“And **he is the head of the body, the congregation; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For Yahweh was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.**”* (Colossians 1:18-19)

These gender-oriented positions exist for the strengthening of, and building up of the body so as to maintain stability and truth within the congregation. As members of the body of the Messiah, we are expected to acknowledge the various positions of authority and show our respect to those of position. By so doing, we in effect show respect to Yahweh and Yahshua as the higher powers in the headship chain of authority.

Headship in the Congregation

In 1 Corinthians, chapter 11, the Apostle Paul deals with the subject of headship as it relates to gender. He applies the concept of headship within the confines of the congregation and specifically with the worship service. Let us consider 1 Corinthians 11: 2-16 in regard to the proper application of headship in the congregation.

Paul begins this passage by describing headship, gender-wise, in terms of the Father and Son. *“I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings, just as I passed them on to you. Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Messiah, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Messiah is Yahweh.”* (1 Corinthians 11:2-3) The relationship in regard to authority that exists between Yahweh and Yahshua parallels the relationship that exists between a man and a woman. Specifically speaking, it applies to a husband and his wife. In the spiritual sense, a faithful, covenant-keeping man has authority over his wife as her head.

The man is in the authoritative position over the woman the same way that Yahweh is over Yahshua. Yahweh has his head uncovered to show his position of authority whereas, Yahshua, as the high priest (Hebrews 8:1-6), has his head covered to show subjection to the Father. Within the worship service, because of headship, a man who is praying or prophesying (offering worship) must have his physical head uncovered so as to not dishonor Yahshua his spiritual head. *“Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head.”* (1 Corinthians 11:4) It should be noted that in modern Judaism it is common practice for a man to cover his head in worship. Such a practice is unacceptable in Messianic True Worship as it dishonors Yahshua. We read the following quote in ***The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion*** in the article entitled “COVERING OF THE HEAD” it says; *“There is little basis in Jewish law for the Orthodox custom of going about with covered head, or even for the covering of the head during prayer and other religious exercises. It is an outstanding example of CUSTOM assuming the force of law.”* This article goes on to show that the custom of covering the head in Jewish worship is not biblically based. It quotes the 17th century rabbi, David Ha-Levi who said, *“Jews should cover their heads because Christians do not.”*

Paul goes on to explain how a woman must cover her physical head during worship so as to honor her spiritual head (her husband or in the case of an unmarried woman, her father). *“And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is just as though her head were shaved.”* (1 Corinthians 11:5) We know that for a woman to have her head shaved is a terrible humiliation. Paul uses this strong analogy to emphatically make the point that when worshipping (praying or prophesying) a woman needs to cover her head. The Greek word for uncovered is *akatakaluptos*. This word is a combination of two Greek words: *kata* and *kaluptoo*. These words are defined as the following in the *Strong’s Greek Lexicon*: *“NT:2596> kata (kat-ah’); a primary particle; (prepositionally) down (in place or time), in varied relations (according to the case [genitive case, dative case or accusative case] with which it is joined)”* and *“NT:2572> kalupto (kal-oo’-to); akin to NT:2813 and NT:2928; to cover up (literally or figuratively):KJV - cover, hide.”* The true meaning of this word comes through from the Greek as meaning uncovered.

To understand how praying and prophesying is to be applied, let us examine the meaning of these words. The word “prays” in the *Strong’s Greek Lexicon* is #4336— *proseuchomai* (pros-yoo’-khom-ah-ee); from #4314 and #2172; to pray to [Yahweh], i.e. supplicate, worship. It has been translated in the KJV as: pray (X earnestly, for), make prayer. The word “prophesies” is #4395 in the *Strong’s Greek Lexicon*— *propheteuo* (prof-ate-yoo’-o); from #4396; to foretell events, divine, speak under inspiration, exercise the prophetic office. It has been translated in the KJV as: prophecy. These definitions clearly show that praying and prophesying applies to public and private worship. Praying and prophesying would also apply to the act of personally witnessing the truth of the Word since that would involve quoting scripture and speaking of the truth. To do these things is what prophesying is all about. Therefore, it should be understood that men should uncover their heads when they pray, when they read the word, or when they witness the truth to others. Women should cover their heads when they do these same things.

In verses 7 through 10, Paul again makes the point that in worship a man should have his physical head uncovered because of his position while a woman should have her head covered. *“A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of Yahweh; but the woman is the glory of man. For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head.”* It is obvious from the context here that this applies only to worship otherwise a man could never wear a hat and a woman would continually have to wear a head covering.

The Greek word used in verse 7 for cover is defined in the *Strong's Greek Lexicon* as "NT:2619> katakalupto (kat-ak-al-ooop'-to); from NT:2596 and NT:2572; to cover wholly, i.e. veil: KJV - cover, hide."

This is a variation of the previous Greek word defined as "uncovered." Paul stresses that a woman must wear a head covering during worship as a sign of authority on her head to show subjection to her husband and because of the angels. It should be noted here that the word angels can actually refer to ministers or elders of the congregation. In the *Strong's Greek Lexicon* angels is defined as follows: NT:32> aggelos (ang'-el-os); from aggello [probably derived from NT:71; compare NT:34] (to bring tidings); a messenger; especially an "angel"; by implication, a pastor: KJV - angel, messenger." It remains to be seen as to whether this refers exclusively to angelic beings or to the ministers of the congregation. In either case, in worship, a woman should cover her head as a sign of submitting to authority.

Paul discusses further the relationship that exists between a man and his wife in terms of authority and headship. *"In Yahweh, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from Yahweh."* (1 Corinthians 11:11-12) We can conclude from these verses that there is an inseparable relationship between a husband and his wife which is based upon mutual dependence. This relationship was created by Yahweh for the benefit of both husband and wife. *"Yahweh Elohim said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him...'"* So Yahweh Elohim caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then Yahweh Elohim made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, *"This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."* For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." (Genesis 2:18, 21-24)

In verse 13 Paul says, *"Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to Yahweh with her head uncovered?"* The answer to this question is a resounding NO! The whole point of everything Paul stated previous to this verse is to prove that it is improper for a woman to pray to Yahweh with her head uncovered.

In verses 14 and 15 the subject changes from head coverings to hair. Paul goes on to relate the natural reasons why a woman has long hair while a man is to have short hair. *"Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering."* He shows that a woman is to have long hair while a man is to have short hair. In verse 15 he describes a woman's hair as being a covering. This word as defined by the *Strong's Greek Lexicon* is: "NT:4018> peribolaion (per-ib-ol'-ah-yon); neuter of a presumed derivative of NT:4016; something thrown around one, i.e. a mantle, veil: KJV - covering, vesture." The use of this particular Greek word indicates that a woman's hair should be long enough to cover her shoulders. Due to ethnic and racial differences each woman's hair is different. Some women are able to grow their hair very long, while other women are not, due to their type of hair. A woman's hair is to be her glory. As such, she should, according to Paul, seek to have her hair of a suitable length which he defines as being a covering (falling on her shoulders). Some religious groups have taken the stand that a woman should not trim her hair. No where in this text, or in the Bible, does it say or imply such a thing. Many times, it is necessary for a woman to trim her hair in order to maintain its beauty as her glory. Hair that grows down to the floor is not practical or beautiful. Neither is unhealthy hair of uneven length with split ends, a glory to a woman. A woman's hair is her glory and as such she should maintain its beauty through regular upkeep and care.

Paul concludes his teaching on headship as it applies to men and women in worship by saying in verse 16, *"If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice-nor do the congregations of Yahweh."* With this powerful statement he closes the discussion on headship and any controversy that may have existed. There should be no contentions regarding head coverings or the length of a woman's hair.

Women and Headship

In regard to women, there is more to headship than just wearing a head covering during worship services. Headship is a spiritual state of mind that is reflected in a woman's attitude and conduct. She shows through her converted actions that she is in subjection to the authority of Yahweh. Paul expresses this important teaching in 1 Timothy 2:9-15. *"I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship Yahweh. A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing-if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety."*

What was true then, is true now. Generally speaking, women are more concerned with their outward appearance than are men. A woman who is in subjection to her head (husband, father, or elder) will dress and groom herself in all modesty. She will not seek to have authority over a man but will submit to Yahweh's ordained authority. This type of attitude and conduct will, according to the Apostle Peter, bring forth a spiritually motivated woman who is in subjection to her husband in the same way that Sarah obeyed Abraham. *"Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in Yahweh's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in Yahweh used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear."* (1 Peter 3:1-6)

By wearing a head covering and being properly attired, a woman has the opportunity to follow the example of the holy women of the past who put their hope and trust in Yahweh. To a "worthy woman" of this caliber (Proverbs 31:10-31), wearing a head covering is her way of outwardly demonstrating her submission to the authority of her husband and Yahweh. This is best illustrated by the instance when Rebekah first met her husband to be, Isaac. Her initial reaction was to cover her head as a sign of subjection to him as her head. *"He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching. Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel and asked the servant, "Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?" "He is my master," the servant answered. **So she took her veil and covered herself.** Then the servant told Isaac all he had done. Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."* (Genesis 24:63-67) What a beautiful love story this is. It demonstrates how Rebekah was able to outwardly express her inward desire to be in subjection to Isaac as her husband, and the loving relationship that resulted from her submissive attitude. It should be the desire of all married women of faith to show their subjection to their loving husbands.

Husbands and Wives

Headship is not something that is one sided. On the contrary, husbands are exhorted to **honor and to love** their wives as the weaker vessel. *“Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and **treat them with respect** as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.”* (1 Peter 3:7)

The proper application of headship within a marriage will bring love and respect to their union and will bring them both spiritual blessings. *“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Master. For the husband is the head of the wife as Messiah is the head of the congregation, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the congregation submits to Messiah, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. **Husbands, love your wives, just as Messiah loved the congregation and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant congregation, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Messiah does the congregation— for we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery-but I am talking about Messiah and the congregation. However, **each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.**”*** (Ephesians 5:22-33)

The relationship shared by a converted husband and wife is something special. The husband will always show love and consideration to his beloved wife. She in turn will show the utmost respect and care for him as her head. Their relationship will have a positive effect upon their children which will reinforce headship within the nuclear family. *“Children, obey your parents in Yahweh, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—“that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of Yahweh.”* (Ephesians 6:1-4) Following the commanded precepts of headship will bring mutual respect among family members. This respect and love will be carried over into the worship of Yahweh.

Yahweh’s covenant Law is at the root of headship within the family. By showing our love for Yahweh through obedience to His Law, we teach our children by example and gain the respect of our family members. *“Hear, O Israel: Yahweh is our Elohim, Yahweh is one. Love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”* (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

Conclusion

As sincere seekers of truth we need to recognize the full importance of the doctrine of headship. Yahshua the Messiah has set the example for us to follow. He showed love and respect for all people regardless of their status in life, ethnicity, or gender. This teaching has been perpetuated by all true worshipers. We have an obligation to show respect to the various positions within the congregation and our families. As such, we follow Yahshua’s example and give honor where it is due. Yahshua, as our high priest, has his head covered to show respect and subjection to the Father. In worship, women, as the weaker partner, cover their heads to show respect and subjection to their husbands (fathers and elders).

By wearing a head covering, a married woman, in particular, shows that she respects her husband as her spiritual head. Women are to have long hair which covers her shoulders (if possible), while men are to have short hair. These are outward signs of an inward belief in the teaching of headship.

The doctrine of headship emphasizes the importance of mutual respect within the congregation and the family. Husbands, wives, and children will develop love and esteem that will carry over into their spiritual service to Yahweh and Yahshua. This respect comes as a result of having true love for Yahweh.

Let us take to heart this important teaching and establish headship within our physical and spiritual lives. As we do so, we will be able to attain to a higher spiritual level as we ultimately show respect and subjection to Yahweh as our Heavenly Father and to Yahshua as our Savior and High Priest.

*All Bible quotes are from the New International Version unless noted otherwise.
The Sacred Names have been inserted.*

For more Bible Truth literature, you can contact us on the Web at:

YahsTruth.org

*Or write to:
Yahweh's Truth Ministries
P.O. Box 547
Loganville, GA 30050*