

## Man's Will to Power / God's Authority

What in the world are we to do with this verse? "For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man." (1 Corinthians 11:7) Quite aside from the issue of head covering and what that symbolizes for women, we have the idea that man is the image and glory of God, while woman is seemingly, merely, the glory of man. Must we conclude that Paul thought women to be inferior to men?

Let's take a closer look. The context of this verse is not gender relationships, but parallel relationships between God the Father and Jesus, Jesus and man, and husband and wife. Though Jesus is the exact image and glory of God, we do not see Him as less than God. Rather, He somehow *is* the exact *image* of God. The word image comes from the Greek *eikon*, which is a *bodily representation* (NASB Greek Lexicon). Jesus is a bodily representation of God. Therefore, Jesus and God share the same *identity*.

Similarly, woman is the image and glory of man. The word glory, *doxa*, refers to appearance. Thus, the glory of God refers to His splendor. If woman is the image and glory of man, she is his exact representation and reflects his magnificence in bodily form. Therefore, if man was created in the image of God and woman in the image of man, then both originate with God, without any distortion of that image.

Why, then, did Paul use this relationship between God, man, and woman to explain why a woman should cover her head, while a man should not? If man is the splendor and bodily representation of God, implying that he should therefore not cover his head, then why should woman, who is the

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splendor of man, cover hers? We read that the covering has something to do with authority, because the woman was created for the sake of the man, not man for the sake of woman, and that this head covering was necessary “because of the angels.” This would seem to imply that the man has been given authority over the woman, and the woman should acknowledge male authority in order to prevent angels from usurping it. The angels apparently do not pose a similar threat to the authority of God over man. But how could this be? Surely many men reject the authority of God. And many a man accepts human authority over the authority of God. Nevertheless, Paul reasons, “it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression.” (1 Timothy 2:14) Is there some way to understand this that does not debase womankind? Why should women be any more vulnerable than men to the authority of angels? Surely a man who rejects God must make himself open to other authorities.

Perhaps there is a kind of sexuality involved in the attraction of women to authority figures that is lacking in the attraction of men to God as the ultimate authority. Let’s look at the parallels between the relationship between God and Jesus, Jesus and man, and man and woman. In what ways are these relationships the same, and in what way might they now be different? We begin with God, who is love. But love, in order to be love, must have an object. And in order for love to flow, love must inspire love in return. So, God expresses His love towards Jesus, and Jesus receives God’s love. Jesus then recognizes God as love, and loves this God who is love. Now, what we love most becomes the most important source of our identity. What we love most becomes the source of what motivates us above all else. It becomes the god, or lord, of our lives, and in that way defines who we really are. This

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means that Jesus, by loving God above all else, is the image of God's love. Jesus reflects God's love back to God, making a complete circle of love within the godhead itself.

But God's love does not stop there. In love, God created man. And again, man, by loving God, who is love, became in essence one who loved God. God became the source of man's original identity. Man became the image and glory of God by loving Him. The circle of love now has grown to include man. And God made woman in the image of man. The man loved the woman. The love of man for woman was God's love because man was the image of God, who is love. The woman loved the man, who was the image of God, who is love, so God became the ultimate source of the woman's identity as well. She was one with the man in spirit, and desired to submit to him as to God. But the man, who was love, did not dominate the woman with power. The authority of the man came from the love of God, and not from a will to power. If there was a sexual relationship between the original man and woman before their separation from God, it was probably animal-like in innocence, and lacked the essential ingredient of perverted erotic love in unregenerate man, which is the will to power.

Fallen unregenerate man dominates by his will to power, not by God's love. He does so because he does not take his identity from God, but from the world, and from women in particular. The extent to which he can cause the world to submit to him, is the extent to which he knows himself as a god. He is trying to restore his fallen god-image, which was one of authority shared with God, in that it was inspired by the loving mind of God working through man. God gave man His authority to subdue the earth and to rule over it. But unregenerate man does not share the identity of God by loving God, and so he

does not share the mind of God. The efforts of man to regain authority involve the will to power. But he must use the world as the source of his identity in order to reestablish his rule, and this means that he becomes an idolater. His need to know himself by his power over the world forces him to bow down before, or in essence, to worship the world. He worships woman, in particular, in order to subdue and rule over her. In essence, man worships woman in exchange for her worship of him, which feeds his will to power.

So we have in the fallen relationship between man and woman a deceptive imitation of God's love and God's authority. Erotic love between unregenerate people is an expression of the nature of that relationship. It is a craving for lost authority that results directly from the fall. And the woman, who no longer knows herself in relation to the love of God, particularly as it was expressed through the man, now seeks to know herself in relation to man's need to know himself as god-like in authority. Her response to male authority has become a perverted erotic response because it involves submission to power as need, rather than submission to God's love as authority in man.

Power as need seduces by offering an identity source, or a false source of life, in exchange for worship. In perverted erotic love, the form of worship offered is an invitation to enter into and possess the self. This creates the exhilarating illusion of a life-giving and life-receiving process, where both partners are giving and both are receiving. But the truth is that the male, with his will to power, has nothing to give, and the female, in her need for an identity, can never satisfy the male will to power. Therefore, in order to maintain the illusion of giving power and receiving an identity, the ritual of

perverted erotic love has to penetrate somehow deeper and deeper. It naturally, (or unnaturally), tends towards sadomasochism.

We can see why a woman might be drawn to men or gods with no real authority from God, but with a will to power. Women were designed by God to be drawn to authentic authority originating with God, and can be fooled into following false authorities with a will to power. Of course, when a woman takes her identity from a man, rather than from God, she manipulates his need for her own purposes. But generally women are not power-hungry in the same way men are. They don't tend to crave obedience and submission from others, but their identity is vulnerable unless they can be sure the male source is securely theirs. Men must have been designed to respond to the direct and genuine authority of God. However, men were apparently not created with an inclination to submit to human authority figures – unless they intend by submission to use men with superior power as boot straps to support their own will to power. Men who worship false gods may not be deceived so often as they intend to borrow power to deceive others.

If the fallen sexual relationship is in essence a power/submission relationship, is there such a thing as a sexual relationship that has as its source the love of God? I think so. But it loses the force of idolatrous need. It is innocent and manageable, not creating uncontrollable desires. But of course, unregenerate man wants to experience passion that is absolutely overpowering. For him, to risk passionate love is to take a chance on really living. For the brave and daring, it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all! Really? Can a force that accepts no limits be a good thing? Passion that overwhelms has its roots in spiritual death. It masquerades as life because of the depth of feeling it inspires. But there is something better

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than this illusion of life, and that is real life in relation to the living God, and human love that finds its source in Him.