

Message #77 of Scripture Beneath The Surface
“Rebellion Against God's Authority - Part 2”

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to continue with the subject of God's authority, and the rebellion which is at work in God's people. This is the second message of a two-part message entitled, “Rebellion Against God's Authority.” If you missed that message, please feel free to contact us for a copy of it, as well as this message for today. Remember, our messages are free. There is no cost for our material.

Now, let's take a look at authority from a different perspective. In scripture, one of the major forms of symbolic description of authority is the covering. The concept of covering the head, or of covering the body, whether it is the woman receiving the man as her covering, or mankind receiving Jesus Christ as their covering, is a concept which is almost completely ignored by Christianity. In Genesis we have the story of Adam and Eve and the original sin. Because sin entered into the world, Adam and Eve became aware of their nakedness. For the first time they experienced a feeling of shame. It wasn't just that they were aware of their nakedness, but they were also ashamed of it, and they hid themselves from God. In order to cover themselves they took leaves of plants and wrapped themselves with them. The shame that mankind feels by their nakedness is something that has never gone away. Shame of nakedness is evident in the world, and has been evident ever since the original sin. Only those who are extremely wicked in the sight of God flaunt their nakedness. To uncover the body in public is considered inappropriate, even by nonreligious people. Even nonreligious people generally require specific places or situations for public nudity. There is no country on earth which does not recognize the shame of nakedness in general.

When Adam and Eve sinned, and their nakedness was revealed to them, it became necessary to cover them to take away their shame. Let's take a moment to consider the concept of shame, and what that means. The feeling of shame is an emotional response to loss of self esteem. To feel shame is to consider yourself unacceptable in the eyes of someone else. Whether some other person displays disapproval toward you or not, it is your personal belief of your unworthiness that causes your shame. Shame is a loss of confidence in your own value. When Adam and Eve sinned, they experienced an awareness of their disobedience to God. They recognized their rebellion against God's word, and the awareness of their nakedness instantly became a constant reminder that they were not acceptable in the sight of God. Their self esteem was destroyed. They were brought to shame.

When we are publicly displayed in nakedness, we also experience shame for not measuring up to the standard God has set. It is the standards which are established in our belief system which determine whether we will feel shame or confidence in ourselves. It is the way we perceive things. Whether it is a standard of righteousness established by God, or a standard of dress established by the peer pressure of society, still, when we accept that standard for ourselves, we will feel confident as long as we maintain that standard, and we will feel shame when we can't maintain it. Adam and Eve felt shame because they had not measured up to God's expectations. They were convinced that the standards God had set were good. Their shame was that they then realized that they were not good enough, and would be rejected by God. It is the same concept in children who suffer peer pressure in school, and strive to be like the other students in order to feel self-esteem. If a child cannot dress in the style and quality of clothing that the other students wear, they will suffer a loss of self-esteem, a loss of self respect, and will consider themselves to be of lesser value.

From the social aspect, not all standards are good. Sometimes social standards of acceptable behavior do not line up with God's word, yet the people still continue to observe social standards instead of God's standards. But, for Christians, the standard can be none other than the word of God. Satan works to destroy God's authority by manipulating concepts. He presents a distorted perspective of God's word in order to present a distorted perspective of acceptable standards. He attempts to erase standards of righteousness, and to replace them with his own form of acceptable behavior. When humans exchange the standards established by God for new standards of behavior based on their own perceptions and experiences, rebellion against God takes place. We humans are in a world where the trial of our faith is taking place. God is determining who will, and who will not, adhere to the principles established by God. There is ample opportunity to choose other standards of behavior, but only the standards of behavior established by God will still be standing at the end of time. And also, it is only by pleasing God that we will stand at the end of time. And this will depend on whether or not we have the covering of God which takes away the sin of disobedience.

God gave Adam and Eve a covering of animal skins to take away their shame, in that the fig leaves they had sewn together for clothing were insufficient. The skins of animals were

necessary in order to establish the principle of blood being shed in order to make a covering for sin. This requirement, established at the beginning of our time as a symbolic concept was fulfilled in the day that Jesus shed his blood on the cross of Calvary in order to cover our shame from the sin of disobedience. When we come under the covering of Jesus Christ through his blood, our nakedness, our shame for having not come up to God's established standard of behavior, is erased. The covering given to mankind is a covering that covers shame. It is a covering which hides our flaws. It is a replacement for the loss of self-esteem. When we find ourselves unable to measure up to our own perspective of what is and is not acceptable behavior, we must receive a covering which hides our flaws in order for us to boldly and confidently walk before others.

This concept is evident in the Biblical description of our entering into the presence of God. We know that in the original tabernacle for the Israelites, as well as in the temple at Jerusalem, there was a veil between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. The place of God's dwelling was in the Most Holy Place, and mankind, as a whole, could not enter into God's presence there because of sin. The veil represented a barrier of sin which blocked our way into the presence of God. This veil was a means of separating the sight of sinful man from the eyes of God. Just as a woman would cover her head by putting a veil over herself, this temple veil was a temporary covering which kept the people from being seen by God. By not being seen, the people were not displaying their shame of sin before God.

In the same sense, the woman's veil would hide her from sight, and would be a physical symbolic representation of acknowledging her own lack of acceptance. It is the hiding of, the veiling of, your own self that is at the center of true submission to God's authority. When Adam and Eve attempted to hide their nakedness with fig leaves, it was a sign of their willingness to admit their fault, and to show God their intent to conform. On the other hand, as is done so openly in many instances in this latter day, nakedness is boldly displayed in complete defiance to God's standards of righteousness. When we clothe ourselves, we are acknowledging our sin. When we clothe ourselves, we are acknowledging God's authority. We are acknowledging God's right to establish what is right and what is wrong. To refuse to be covered is to blatantly defy the authority of God, in that we profess no shame for our disobedience to his word.

By accepting the covering of the blood of Jesus, we are then able to enter into the presence of God. However, the covering of the blood of Jesus only applies to our sins, which erases our debt of sin to God. But the submission to the authority of God still must be maintained. Just because we have the covering of Jesus' blood does not mean that we can then ignore the authority of God. God still calls his people to works of righteousness. Therefore, to disobey God's word is still an act of rebellion. Jesus demonstrated his willingness to submit to the authority of God by speaking only the words of God instead of his own words, and by doing only the works of God instead of his own works. Jesus was God, but he was also flesh and blood. As such, he had normal human temptations. As a human being, Jesus could well have set aside God's purpose in exchange for his own purposes. Yet, Jesus refused the call of the flesh in order to answer the call of God. He gave up his own flesh and blood life in order to accomplish the will of God. No, not

just in his death on the cross, but also in each and every day of his life. He refused to live his own life according to his own standards, and chose rather to turn his life over to God. This was the perfection needed in order to become the perfect sacrifice for our disobedience, for our rebellion against the authority of God.

Take a minute with me and let's look at 1 Corinthians 11. The first several verses explain the submission to God's authority which God has required from each of us. The ultimate authority in these verses is God. He is the head of all things. And remember, it is the head which determines what the body does. In these verses it says that the head of the woman is the man, and that the head of the man is Christ, and that the head of Christ is God. This is a line of succession, a line of authority which God established. In each portion of this line of authority which extends from God, to Christ, to man, and to woman, there is purpose of establishing the supreme authority of God. Even Jesus came under this descending line of authority, even though he was actually God himself, God in the flesh. But even though he was God, Jesus accepted his role in the line of authority in order to bring about the restoration of righteousness that had been destroyed by the rebellion of Satan.

We also must accept our role of responsibility if we are to accomplish the works of God rather than our own works. Yet, Christian men and women have ignored their established roles to a great extent, and in some cases have actually reversed these roles. In some homes, it is the woman who is the authority, and the man which covers his head. But men are not supposed to cover their heads, for Paul states in 1 Corinthians 11:7, that the man should not cover his head for he has been created in the image and glory of God. On the other hand, Paul states that the woman should be covered, for she is the glory of the man.

This may seem confusing, but the point of this and other passages of scripture which describe the role of humans in their obedience to the authority of God is that we each have a role which we are born to, and to reject that role and to adopt our own set of standards is disobedience to God. It is rebellion against the will of God. The covering of the head, which Paul refers to, is not a social custom in which the head is covered physically. In the Old Testament the covering would have been a physical covering because they were living out a physical scenario to God's plan. But in the New Testament scriptures there is no custom, no social requirements in a physical sense, as Paul explains in verse 16 of 1 Corinthians 11. The covering, or not covering, of the head is not physical, but is in the sense of endeavoring to display or not to display. In the sense of the woman, it is necessary to remove herself as the center of attention when in a public setting when the church is gathered together. Yet, this is when the man is supposed to be seen, for he is not displaying himself, but is displaying his role as the image and glory of God. It is God who should be displayed. For the man, it is necessary to refrain from being in the background. But sadly, man keeps himself in the background in many ways when he should be about the business of God, and should be representing Christ. All too many times Christian men are setting aside their responsibility of representing the image and glory of God, and instead, they are busy displaying themselves. In the same sense, women display themselves, contrary to scripture, by drawing attention to themselves with inappropriate clothing, jewelry and makeup.

Of course, man is quite good as reminding women that they are not men, and they were not made to be the authority over man, yet, men have not accepted their own role of manhood either. Often, it is man who complains of women crowding into the man's territory and usurping authority, yet men often refuse to perform their role, and even turn their role of responsibility over to women who they are complaining about.

I recently heard a woman reply to the question of whether or not our country should consider having a woman as president. She responded with the rhetorical question, "What! Are there no men to fill the position?" Of course, it was a good statement in reply to the tendency of human beings to rebel against the line of authority that God has established. Men don't want to accept their role as the representative of Christ by carrying out the responsibilities and duties which God has called them to perform. Women also have a tendency to want to lead. But for either the man or woman to reject the role that God ordained for them is an act of rebellion against God's authority.

And let me take a minute here to clarify something. Authority to appoint us to our roles of responsibility is the absolute privilege of God. He can designate us to be a man or woman if he wants to. And, because he is God, and is the supreme authority, he has the right to expect us to fulfill that role whether we would like to be something else or not. Sometimes the church comes up with a doctrinal position which goes against the principles of God's word, as in the case accepting women as ministers who represent the church. They cite many articles and books written by learned men and women which suggest that the scripture which clearly outlines the responsibilities of men and women are actually antiquated and no longer are applicable in today's modern society. This is how homosexuality has been allowed to emerge into the mainstream churches. And, this is also how the reversal of men's and woman's roles in the churches have taken place. Homosexuality is the same concept, for it reverses the natural roles God called men and women to fulfill. However, to attempt a role reversal may seem like good common sense to some people, but we must remember the scripture from 1 Corinthians 3:19, which says, "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He takes the wise in their own craftiness."

A covering is that which hides shame. In every case mankind is required to display that which represents the image and glory of God and to hide that which represents the flesh. To hide the flesh is to cover the shame of sinfulness which has entered the world through the lusts of the flesh. It is the flesh which gives a working platform to sin, and through this, the animal nature of the flesh is revealed. Is it any wonder that flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven? Sin has brought death. In Genesis Eve was aware of God's word that promised death if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Death is the opposite of life. And, because death is the result of disobedience to God, rebellion brings death instead of life. Life is that which comes from God, and death is that which comes to us when we are without God.

When God created woman, he created a being which could conceive life in the womb. But this life could not be conceived without the seed of man. It is necessary for man and woman to come together into one flesh in order to bring about life. Without the seed of man, the woman will not bear children, and therefore will not bring forth life. In the Old Testament this was symbolized by shame for a woman who was childless. The principle is not erased in the New Testament, for it still accurately reflects the concept of our being called to be the bride of Christ. We, by receiving the seed of Christ, can bring forth life with that seed. The seed of the man in the Old Testament was physical seed, but the seed of the New Testament is the word of God. The shame of the woman, as symbolized in the Old Testament, was demonstrated by the woman's blood of menstruation. It was evidence of death instead of bringing forth life. This is why the woman was considered to be unclean during the time of menstruation. A husband then become her covering, hiding her shame of being unable to bring forth life.

In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul is attempting to explain the overlying principle of why God created man and woman in opposite roles. He is attempting to show the concept of God being the supreme authority, and of the supplying of righteous seed which brings life eternal. Just as the woman can be delivered from her shame of not bringing forth life, mankind can also be delivered from bringing forth death. What mankind needs in order to take away the shame of death, and to bring forth life, is the seed of God which gives life. However, just as the woman must submit herself to her husband in order to cover her shame of childlessness, we humans must submit ourselves to God in order to receive his seed and to bear life eternal. Mankind cannot escape the sin of this world which brings death without subjecting himself to the dominating authority of God. It was rebellion against the gloriousness of God's righteous ways that brought death. With death came shame. But through God came the covering which hid our shame, and by our submission to the authority of God, we bear righteous fruit unto eternal life.

The concept of 1 Corinthians 11, which tells us that the head of the woman is the man, and that the head of man is Christ, and that the head of Christ is God, is not an antiquated concept of the Old Testament which should be discarded for new age thinking. The principles of God have been established from the beginning for the instruction of mankind. But we must search the scriptures for the understanding if we are to come to a more perfect knowledge of God. Those who refuse to acknowledge the principles of scripture, and begin to make new doctrinal forms which are apposed to the word of God, are those who have succumbed to Satan's temptation to set aside God's word and to do as Satan has done, that is, to become our own authority. But being our own authority will only leave us unmarried, and if we reject God's established principles, we will only succeed in being eternally childless. We will not bring forth life, and our shame will not be covered.

Most Christians can generally see that the concept of homosexuality is anti-Christ in nature just in the fact that it cannot bring forth life. But the concept of reversal of Biblical roles for men and women in Christianity is also a concept which will bring forth childlessness. God has called us to fulfill our roles, whether we are men or women. But for the husband to refuse to take his place of responsibility for giving out the spiritual seed of life, or for the wife to exchange her role of helpmate for the man, is inappropriate. The role of man and woman has been provided in the earth in order to reveal the authority concept of God. We cannot rebel against the authority structure God has established. Just imagine what it would be like if we let God do his work his

way, and we also did his work our way. Can you imagine what would happen if God made us co-equal with him in the work of bringing forth eternal life? In the same sense, we must conform to God's authority, and we must submit ourselves to him in the role he has given us to fulfill. Anything less than this is rebellion. So, you choose. Do you want to be obedient, or do you want to do it your way? For humans, doing it our own way is a fleshly principle which has been established by Satan's world social system. It is not a principle of God's word. God's principle is obedience to his word. And rebellion against God is as the sin of witchcraft, for it seeks to operate in power which is not ordained of God.