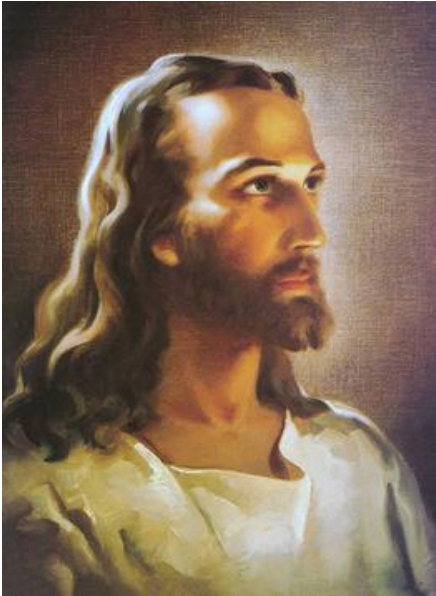


Did Jesus Have Long Hair?

Pastor Kelly Sensenig



No, this is not Jesus! It is an artist's conception of Jesus. Jesus was not an effeminate hippie! Today there are many men and boys within our society who have long hair. The longer hairstyle on men in these modern times finds its roots in the musical groups such as the Beatles and other early rock and roll groups in America. The "Jesus freaks" and other hippie groups in the 60's and 70's wore their hair longer. However, the original intent of long hair on men was to convey a direct sign of rebellion to truth, accepted standards of music, society, government, and even war.

The original goal of those who wore their hair longer was to be a sign of rebellion. They promoted free-sex, alcohol, drugs, perverted music, and rebellion against those things that were known to be righteous and acceptable standards in the Bible and society. These revolutionary movements of rebellion adopted the longer hairstyle for men to represent their rebellion to Biblical order, truth, and God. There was no question about their rebellious intent and the sign of their rebellion which was evidenced in their long hair. Over the years long hair on men has spread like a plague throughout our country and world. Unfortunately, many men and boys of today continue to wear their hair long and portray the sign of rebellion to God and truth.

Some might conclude that longer hair on men does not have the same implications as it originally did. However, the Bible has a different conclusion about long hair on men. It still remains a sign of rebellion against God's order for the sexes and man's submission to Jesus Christ who is to be his Head. God's Word does not send mixed messages about the hair length on men. Long hair on men is a sign of femininity and rebellion against God's creative order.

When protests against the long hair of rebellion began to come from Bible believing, God-fearing Christians, the advocates of these newer hairstyles replied that they saw nothing wrong with men wearing long hair since Jesus Himself had long hair. They referred to paintings of Christ which picture Him with long flowing hair. This sent the older generation and some Christian leaders hurrying to the Bible and history books to see if Jesus did have long hair. Many try to justify long hair on men by stating that Jesus Christ also wore his long hair. I think the time has come to set the record straight. Jesus did not have long hair. The answer to this question is found in the Bible.

Pharisaic and Legalistic

Often those who take a stand on the issue of hair are accused of being Pharisaic and legalistic. But what is legalism? It is when man-made laws are imposed on the people of God without the warrant of Scripture. That is one of the things the Pharisees did, for which the Saviour condemned them: "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:9). But long hair on women and short hair on men, this is the commandment of God, not the tradition of men! It comes from the Word of God.

Legalism is also when people attempt to make themselves right with God through keeping the law (a works system) rather than believing the Gospel (Acts 15:1). This is another thing the Pharisees did, going about to establish their own righteousness, and not submitting to the righteousness of God revealed in Christ (Rom. 10:3). But contending for Biblical standards and commands, whether it be the love of the brethren or distinctions in hair length, is not in and of itself legalism and promoting a self-righteous act of attempting to earn our own favor and salvation before God. No one is saying that people can get right with God through growing and cutting their hair. Far from it! But we should conclude that those who are right with God, through faith alone in Christ alone (Eph. 2:8-9), will want to do the will of God, including having hair lengths that align with what God's Word teaches. This is not working for salvation but working out the salvation that a Christian has already received by faith, in a life of devotion to the Lord who bought them (Phil. 2:12)

The Nature of Things

Does Scripture speak on the issue of hair length? That is the question. If the Bible is silent on the subject, then we may be silent also. But if God's Word has spoken on the matter, then we must find out why and how it applies to our lives today. Despite a certain level of ignorance about hair lengths, the Bible makes some statements about hair that might be of help to us in living our Christian lives for God's glory.



Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 11:14-15 are clear to everyone who is willing to receive them: "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair (*lets his hair grow*), it is a shame (*dishonor*) unto him? But if a woman have long hair (*lets her hair grow*), it is a glory (*honor, dignity, and beauty*) to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering."

This passage shows that "if a man have long hair" (verse 14), that is one thing. But "if a woman have long hair" (verse 15), that is an entirely different matter. Biblically, it is the length of her hair that must chiefly distinguish her hair from a man's. Yes, it's very clear that hair does matter! Don't second guess this. As far as hair is concerned, the distinction between "a man" and "a woman" is to be shown in the different lengths of their hair. If a man's hair is long, that is "a shame" and therefore wrong. But if a woman's hair is long, that is "a glory" and therefore right. So, the teaching of the passage is clear enough: men and boys should have short hair; women and girls should have long hair. An article in the November 1927 Free Presbyterian Magazine rightly said: "This one passage should suffice for all who wish to please God" (p. 273).

That there is to be a distinction between male and female hair is confirmed by an assumption in another passage of God's Word. Revelation 9:7-8 states in its description of the locusts that "their faces were as the faces of men" but "they had hair as the hair of women." Clearly, as far as Scripture is concerned, men's and women's hair are to be visibly different, just as their faces are.

1 Corinthians 11:14 teaches us that a man's hair should be short. The concept of "nature" cannot mean that nature naturally grows short hair on men and long hair on women, since biologically we know this is not the case. The word "nature" (Greek - physis) speaks of the order of nature, natural design, the force of laws as opposed what is abnormal and perverse." It speaks of the distinctive native peculiarities of a man and woman. It carries the idea of instinct or an innate sense of what is normal and right. It's a natural state of affairs that intuitively exists within people and is manifest in societal living when heathen practices and purposes do not interfere with God's design for the sexes.

Matthew Aogan and Keith M Watkins conclude in their study:

"The word nature (Greek physis) in Scripture is always used to refer to creation ordinances. Paul constantly uses it to refer to the created order, what God has ordained from creation onwards. So Paul is speaking of the universal innate judgement that short hair is naturally becoming for a man and long hair is naturally the glory of the woman. Therefore short hair on women and girls is unnatural. It is a clear violation of God's law relating to maintaining the God-ordained difference between the sexes established at creation. It is rebellion against the creation work of God, for "male and female created He them" (Gen. 1:27). Secular writers of Paul's time such as Epictetus and Dio Chrysostom condemned long hair in men in exactly the same terms: as being 'against nature.'"

In other words, hair lengths are in accord with the true nature or instincts of both women and men. Paul is taking about natural instincts that God has intuitively placed within men (Rom. 1:26) which should teach him that his long hair is effeminate and not according to manhood. "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man has long hair, it is a shame to him?" The argument in this passage clearly runs that short hair is masculine and not feminine. Paul states that nature teaches this distinction. It is something that applies in all cultures in all places at all times. Nature here altogether excludes the idea of a mere local custom, specific to Corinth in the first century. The words of 1 Corinthians 11 could not make it clearer that the requirement of long hair for women and short hair for men is grounded on permanent "nature" and not temporary "culture." Again, nature refers to the created order.

Paul argued from nature when insisting that women should not teach or usurp authority over men in 1 Timothy 2:12-13. He traced one reason for that back to the created order: "For Adam was first formed, and then Eve". Even nature teaches that women should not take positions of authority in the church. And the same nature teaches that women should have long hair and men short hair. Paul uses the word nature in Romans 1:26 when explaining that both male and female homosexuality is against the creation ordinance of marriage between the man and the woman: "For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature." Being against nature is also true in relation to hair length! A woman with short hair, and a man with long hair, are against the natural, created order established by God from the beginning. When evangelicals single out homosexuality as particularly against Scripture and nature, but quietly ignore other things that are equally against Scripture and nature, they are being selective and not handling the Word of God consistently.

Vogan and Watkins conclude that some will argue:

"What of the fact that some women's hair physically will not grow long? Does that not contradict the idea that nature requires female hair to be long? Many who make this argument have no difficulty in growing their own hair long, if only they wanted to. And the fact that a minority of women (and it is a minority!) have difficulty growing their hair long, whether for health or age reasons, does not negate the Scriptural requirement that female hair should be long whenever possible. Some, through old age or infirmity, cannot physically attend public church services. Does that mean that Scripture does not require everyone else to do so? Of course not. No one argues that. Simply stated, short hair on a woman is a departure from the created norm of nature. It is something to be ashamed of."

In this Scriptural passage Paul poses a rhetorical question that demands a positive reply. The answer is obvious. When a man looks like a woman, he disgraces himself and masculinity. Paul is saying that a man should not abandon the characteristic of natural physiology that marks masculinity. This mark of manhood is a shorter hair length. It is improper for a man to have long hair, equal in length to that of a woman and that which is

expected of her. The word translated “shame” (atimia) literally means “without honor” as in Romans 1:26 which is linked to the practice of homosexuality. The word “atimia” was commonly used by secular writers to denounce long hair on a man as effeminate and degrading.

The King James Bible Commentary concludes:

“In Paul’s experience, he knew of no culture, whether Hebrew, Greek, or Roman, that did not consider long hair a disgrace to man. The only exception to this rule was the Nazarite (Num 6:5; and Ezek 44:20). Thus, to Paul it was significant that just naturally, worldwide cultures emerged with the same sense of propriety regarding long hair on men. The same principle holds true today. The vast majority of cultures regard effeminacy of hair and dress as distasteful and shameful to a man.”

Barret cites a first-century Greek writer, Epictetus, who concluded from these verses: “For this reason we ought to keep the signs that God has given, we ought not to throw them away, nor to confound, so far as we can, the distinctions of the sexes.”

God is not interested in, nor does He accept the “unisex” philosophy. We should not rebel against nature (the God-given distinctions between male and female) because of some fake Christian liberty that we are promoting. It does matter how we present ourselves. The natural instinct or inclination that God has built into men tells a man that long hair is for women and not for men. If they are open to God’s inward revelation of Biblical manhood, they intuitively know that when a man wears long hair it becomes a shame to him. The word for “shame” (vs. 14) speaks of being disgraceful and dishonoring.

In an unwarranted and misguided appeal to 1 Samuel 16:7. Many think that God does not care about people’s outward appearance, as long as their hearts are right. But this conclusion is absolutely wrong (1 Cor. 6:19; 1 Thess. 4:4). The Bible is clear on this subject. When a man wears his hair longer it is disgraceful “unto him” for it displays femininity instead of masculinity and in doing so portrays a reversal of God’s Genesis order that argues for male leadership and female submission (1 Cor. 11:3). A man disgraces himself when he tries to walk close to the line or crosses the line

of masculine hair length. I always chuckle when I see men who are bald on the top wearing long hair down their back. We might call them bald hippies! Seriously, a man shames the masculine sex, God's order for the sexes, God's original design, when he tries to act like a woman.

Bruce states:

"The clear differentiation of the sexes ought always to be maintained (and differences in hairstyle will be involved), else society stands in danger of what ultimately becomes sexual perversion. In the world which [Paul] and his readers knew nature gave a lead by endowing man with shorter hair than woman, so that long hair in a man was regarded as effeminate, whereas in a woman it was her pride."

Barret concludes:

"It does seem probable that the horror of homosexuality is behind a good deal of Paul's argument.... Human beings must give glory to God by being (e.g. in their unconcealed and unperverted sexual differentiation) what God intended them to be."

In the 1960's and 1970's the longer hair on men was worn as a badge and symbol of rebellion and contempt for the norm or what the apostle Paul calls "nature." The trend continues to this day.

Rod Mattoon comments:

"Rebellion was not only displayed by the long hair on men, it was also expressed by indulging in frequent sexual immorality with loose young women, experimenting with mind-altering drugs like LSD and marijuana, by defying moral standards of decency, by public nudity, by living in poverty and filth, by a fascination for the worship of Satan, and by riots and anti-war demonstrations protesting the war in Vietnam.

"If you have ever seen film clips of what happened at a place called Woodstock, one of the largest outdoor rock concerts in history, you will have a pretty good idea of the philosophy and lifestyle of the youth in America at that time. The heroes of young people in the nation were rock musicians and almost every one of these men wore their hair long."

God intended a distinction between the sexes. Men are to look and act like men and ladies are to look and to act like ladies. This is part of His design for the sexes.

Deuteronomy 22:5

“The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.”

This was given as a command against transgenderism and crossdressing. There should be a clear distinction in the apparel and overall appearance between a man and woman. This Biblical and unchanging moral or ethical command repeated in both testaments eliminates the so-called “unisex” styles.

John Phillipps concurs with this also when summarizing:

“During the hippie craze in our Western society, those who dropped out of the Establishment deliberately adopted an interesting and significant way of displaying their revolt against the established norms of society. The men let their hair grow long. That long hair of theirs was worn as a badge and symbol of their contempt for the norm—what Paul calls here “nature.” Along with this long hair went a militant drug culture, a flagrant defiance of all established moral standards, a preoccupation with poverty, dirt, and squalor, a fascination with the occult, a craze for rock music and filthy lyrics, and orchestrated mass demonstrations against everything that displeased them. The total breakdown in our society of the Judeo-Christian ethic stems from those days and the failure of the Establishment to deal firmly and decisively with the problem. The symbol of the revolt was everywhere evident — men with long, unkempt hair.”

Paul closed this portion of Scripture in 1 Corinthians 11:16 by stating that if anyone wanted to argue or be contentious about this issue, there was no other apostolic custom and Biblical mandate than this one. “But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.” This issue was not open for debate. Long hair on men was against nature and longer hair on women was her natural God-given veil. If any man desires to dispute me, then, we have no other precedent. To violate

this principle is to go against a standard that is maintained in every church according to God's creative design of the sexes.

Reflect on this. The apostle Paul actually saw Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 9:1). Paul was a trustworthy man who wrote a large part of the New Testament. He knew exactly what Jesus Christ looked like. In 1 Corinthians 11:14, Paul wrote, if a man has long hair, it is a shame (disgrace) unto him." It's quite unthinkable that Paul would have made such a statement if Jesus Christ had long hair. How could anything about Jesus Christ be called disgraceful?

In the natural order of things, it only seems appropriate that a man's long hair is unnatural and effeminate. Of course, the Scripture does not dictate "spirituality" by the length of inches in a person's haircut. However, the real and deeper issue here is submission to divine authority – what God says about hair lengths and the distinction among the sexes. Therefore, every aspect of the believer's life should reflect his obedience and submission to the Word of God, to the Lord Jesus Christ, and God's divinely established authority for both men and women.

A Man Hippie?



The word translated "long hair" (komao) means just that – "to let the hair grow, to have long hair" (Thayer) or "to wear long hair as part of one's attire - to have long hair, to appear with long hair, to wear long hair" (Louw and Nida). The lexical studies all approve this rendering. Some have tried to say that the word for long hair (komao) only means to wear long hair like a woman's long hair and interpret the word this way to leave the door open for men to wear their hair long as long as it does not look like a woman's braided hair.

They base this finding on the fact that the word for "long hair" (komao) comes from the verb form (kome) that means, "to wear tresses of hair" or braided hair. Therefore, it's assumed that this passage has the meaning that

men should not wear long hair – the kind of long hair that looks like a woman’s braided or plaited hair. So some suggest that the command is not against men wearing long hair but hair that looks like a woman’s outwardly adorned hair when she arranges it in braids or a plaited fashion. The focus is on the adornment of a man’s long hair but not on the actual long hair per say. In other words, a man could conceivably be a man hippie by wearing long hair like a woman but not have hair like a woman (braided hair).

This interpretive conclusion is an incredible hoax and injustice to what Paul is saying in this context and defrauds God’s Word. A person tries to huckster God’s Word (2 Cor. 2:17) when they come to these conclusions. It’s making Paul convey something that he never intended to convey. First, the actual word “komao” speaks of long hair – not the adornment of the hair. The lexical aids verify this and even classical Greek references.

Second, the root word (kome) simply means “the hair of the head” and this word comes from another root word (komidzo) that means tending the hair.

Third, one should not override the exact meaning of a word in a text by its root connections. This is not good interpretive practice. When a writer uses a derivative of a word he does so for a reason. We should not try and change the meaning and intended purpose of a writer. There is a certain folly in linguistic reasoning that assumes a word takes on all the meanings of other words related to it in the same passage of Scripture.

If anything, Paul is saying that men are not to have long hair for this is the kind of hair length (long hair) that a woman wears and men should not reflect a woman’s hair length in their outward appearance as males. In other words, if a man wears his hair long (like the hair length of a woman) he is trying to look like a woman in his appearance (braids or no braids). As always, those who are trying to find a needle in a haystack will try anything to approve of men wearing long hair. Braiding or plaiting the hair has nothing to do with Paul’s argument. The argument is against men wearing long hair since long hair by itself reflects a woman’s feminine appearance.

We might also add that Paul says a woman's hair is given to her for a natural veil (vs. 15). He says nothing about the way she fixes her hair. The length itself signifies her glory. Furthermore, Paul had previously argued about a woman cutting her hair short or shaving her head (vs. 6) as being improper. The context has nothing to do with the ornamentation of a woman's hair length but the actual length of her hair. Furthermore, long hair on men in the Corinthian culture was a sign of male prostitution in the same way short hair was a sign of female prostitution (vs. 6).

There is absolutely no justification for interpreting 1 Corinthians 11:14 to mean that long hair was okay for men so long as it does not look feminine in appearance. This defies all Scriptural sense and logic. This is because long hair on men cannot look anything but feminine! So the context itself rules out the interpretation that Paul was only referring to long hair on a male that resembled the long braided hair on women. Paul says that long hair on men is feminine, and it distorts the sexual distinction that God intended to display concerning His design for the sexes and society. For a man to wear his hair long is a sign of rebellion against God's established order for society (male headship and female submission) and the man's outward demonstration that Jesus Christ was to be the head or Lord of his life (1 Cor. 11:3).

Of course, everyone who wants to challenge this concept of a universal law of hair length which covers a woman's head but not a man's head wants to know how long is long. The Bible does not give a length in inches. However, there is a principle given. Hair that is a covering is proper for women and improper for men. So, the question is, what does it mean for hair to be a covering? It certainly does not mean that the hair is on top of the head if it is designed to be a covering. Woman should take note of this. The Bible clearly teaches in this passage that long hair is a covering and short hair is not.

I concur with David Reagan's conclusion:

"Though I can see many disagreeing with this, I believe that hair that comes over the ears and begins to lie across the shoulders has become a covering (*like the woman's natural veil*) and is therefore long hair. Though this rule is subjective on my part, I have not seen anyone come up with anything

better. Clearly, there needs to be a strong distinction. Men should have short hair. Ladies should have long hair. There are varying degrees of short and long. However, there are also lines between the two that should not be crossed. Long hair on a man says to God that this man does not want to fulfill his God-given role as head of the home and leader. He is rebelling against God's order. Short hair on a woman says to God that she does not want to submit to her role as a helper in the home in submission to her husband (or father if she is young). She is rebelling against authority and God's order.

“So, how does this help us determine the length of hair for Jesus. Well, for one thing, Jesus was a man's man in His human nature. He was no sissy. Though the Old Testament law kept Him from shaving His head (Lev. 21:5), the principles given by Paul would keep Him from having womanly long hair as He is often depicted. Since He is the ultimate source of all scripture, it is no argument to say that 1 Corinthians had not yet been written. Also, how could Paul have given the teaching he did on the length of hair if it was known that Jesus had long hair? This simply will not work.

“There was no sin in Jesus Christ. Therefore, if we can prove a certain hair length to be God's plan for men, we can prove the length of hair on Jesus Christ. This length, according to scripture, was short but not shaven.”

Long Hair and Rebellion



Paul compares a woman's hair and the man's hair to the natural and spiritual order of creation (1 Cor. 11:3). A woman was to wear her hair longer (1 Cor. 11:15) as a feminine sign of her submission to her head – the man. However, a man is to be under the authority of Jesus Christ since

Christ is said to be the “head” or leader of the man. Therefore, when a man tries to veil his head with longer hair, he dishonors his head (Jesus Christ) by conveying the message that he does not want Jesus Christ to rule over his life. He also is saying that he does not want to be the leader (head) in his home.

In the later verses of 1 Corinthians chapter eleven Paul was moving from the custom to the natural order of things that represent the sexes and God's Genesis order. A man should not veil his head with an artificial veil (1 Cor. 11: 7) nor with long hair (1 Cor. 11:14) for he represents male leadership over the woman and because he is following his own head and leader who is Christ. The shorter hair length on a man represents both these important truths. If a man wants to represent Biblical masculinity, male leadership in the home, and that he is a follower of his head Jesus Christ, then he should cut his hair. Men, this is enough truth to get you to the barbershop. God wants you to represent headship over the wife and Christ's headship over your own life by your shorter hair length. Do you want me to make an appointment for you at the barbershop? I'll even pay for your haircut!

The simple truth being taught in 1 Corinthians chapter eleven is this. Long hair on men conveys the message of rebellion against God's command for masculinity and sexual distinction (1 Cor. 11: 14-15), Long hair is a sign of femininity and not masculinity and therefore is open rebellion against God's orderly arranged distinction among the sexes. It also represents God's order of male headship and female submission (1 Cor. 11:3), and rebellion against Jesus Christ who is to be the man's leader and Lord of his life (1 Cor. 11:3). Paul's point in 1 Corinthians 11:14-15 is that a man's hair should look masculine. A woman's hair should look feminine. This should be true regardless of the culture.

Men, you think about this the next time you want to keep your hair looking more like a woman than a man. Paul says that if a man wants to look like a woman (a sissy) he



SISSY

would be sending the message that he wants to rebel against God's order of the sexes. Also, he would be conveying that he does not want to follow God's order of male leadership and submission to Jesus Christ (vs. 3). From the days of Absalom to our present day, long hair on men has been a mark or sign of rebellion (2 Samuel 14:26). 1 Samuel 15:23 says, "For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry."

Reflect on this. Jesus could not have long hair simply because it would be unthinkable that the Lord would contradict the clear teaching of 1 Corinthians 11:14-15 by wearing His hair long. This would convey a sign of rebellion to God's intended order for the sexes (1 Cor. 11:3). Jesus would not want to portray such a message as this by walking around with long hair during His earthly ministry. In fact, Jesus would have sinned by wearing his hair like a hippie. This is an impossibility for Jesus was "holy harmless and undefiled" (Heb. 7:26). Jesus was perfect in everything that He did and said. Therefore, to conclude that Jesus wore His hair long would speak against the impeccability or sinlessness of Jesus Christ.

Titus 2:12

"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

God wants us to promote a righteous lifestyle and not one of rebellion against God's order for the sexes and righteous living. Today long hair on men not only conveys rebellion to God's natural order of the sexes but rebellion to God's righteous ways. This is because of what long hair has been associated with during the hippie movements of the 1960's and 1970's and the culture that wanted to smoke dope, commit so-called free sex, and have no godly restraints or restrictions over their lives.

Pastor George Parsons said:

"Therefore, if the radical and rebellious element in our society has identified with long hair on men, then the male believer must not have anything to do with it. This would be true even if there had been no Biblical mandate such as found in 1 Corinthians 11:14."

In other words, he reminds us of the principle of association and conformity to the world's culturally rebellious ways. He concludes by saying: "We want to clearly and unquestionably avoid any identification with the extreme, radical, worldly and unbiblical movements of our day." In other words, men should not want to take on the appearance of evil and rebellion by wearing their hair long.

1 Thessalonians 5:22

“Abstain from all appearance (every form) of evil.”

Those men who wear their hair long are identifying or associating (1 Cor. 10:20) with the questionable, extreme, radical, worldly and unbiblical movements within our society (the rebellion of the 60’s and 70’s) but also the rock culture and unisex philosophies in our present-day culture and society who continue to identify long hair with sexual infidelity, drugs, unrighteousness, and rebellion against God.

Ephesians 5:7

“Be not ye therefore partakers with them.”

Ephesians 5:11

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*.”

Long hair on men represents rebellion to God’s natural order of creation and the sexes. But more than this, it also represents cultural rebellion against what is true and righteous by associating with things such as lust, sexual vice, drugs, and rebellious music. Therefore, it’s the believer’s responsibility to part from these practices within a pagan and culturally corrupt society.

Romans 12:2 commands:

“And be not conformed to this world (*the world culture that is against God and righteousness*): but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

Long hair on men is not the will of God. We can be sure of this. It is part of a culture that is in rebellion against God. If you want to represent what is good, acceptable, and perfect before God you should represent masculinity, the order of the sexes, and the Biblical and righteous standard of wearing your hair shorter as a man.

1 Peter 1:15-16

“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy”

As men, God not only wants us to be holy in our hearts (1 Sam. 16:7) but also in our hair lengths (1 Cor. 6:19). The same is true regarding women. All manner of our living includes our shorter hair length for men, which is a sign that reflects masculinity, God’s order, and separating from cultural rebellion. God always expects us to be holy or set-apart unto Him and doing what is right.

Considering the day in which we live the believer should present *the least questionable testimony* before the world and represent Christianity as a non-rebellious movement of people that are different than the world and its standards, which represent rebellion against God. The whole unisex movement and philosophy of today is continually trying to blur the obvious distinctions among the sexes in dress and overall appearance. The Christian must remain very discerning and seek to maintain a noticeable difference among the shifting sands of cultural change which has no regard for truth, righteousness and the timeless principles that deal with God’s moral and ethical codes.

Hairstyles are normally clear statements of a person’s intent and heart (1 Pet. 3:3). Long hair on men and short hair on women are not merely harmless fashions but are statements of rebellion against God’s distinction among the sexes, His created order of the sexes, and masculine versus feminine roles (1 Corinthians 11:14,15). The androgynous unisex image is not innocent. It was created by rock musicians who consciously intended to overthrow Biblical order and tradition (2 Thess. 2:15).

Jerry Rubin, a 60's leader of rebellion, says LONG HAIR is the "mark" of REBELLION: He says, "Young kids identify short hair with authority, discipline, unhappiness, boredom, rigidity, hatred of right, and LONG HAIR with letting it go. . . Wherever we go, our HAIR tells people where we stand on Viet Nam, Wallace, campus disruption, dope. We are living TV commercials for the revolution. . . LONG HAIR is the beginning of our

liberation from sexual oppression that underlies the whole military society" (Jerry Rubin, Do It).

Long hair has always been a sign of rebellion to God's natural order of things. It was a sign that people did not want any authority over their lives (government or God). It was surely a sign that men did not want Jesus Christ to be Lord of their lives. This message of rebellion was true in Paul's day, it was true in the 60's and 70's, and it's still true today. Long hair means only one thing – rebellion. It's a sign of rebellion against God's order of the sexes and all authority. Paul clearly reveals it is a sign of effeminacy which is a state of behaving, looking like, or have qualities like a woman (1 Cor. 11:14-15).

Are You a Boy or a Girl?



I'm told that during the "hippie" days there was a rock song with words that went like this. "Are you a boy, or are you a girl? With your long blond hair, you look like a girl." Maybe some of the ex-hippies remember this one. In many churches we could sing these words for they actually support what Paul is saying in 1 Corinthians 11:14. When a little boy has long hair he looks like a little girl. When a man has long hair he looks like a woman. The opposite would be true for a woman. We would change the song and sing: "Are you a girl, or are you a boy? With your short hair, you look like a boy." God wants distinction among the sexes, and He makes a clear statement in these texts before us concerning this. As Christians we should not distort what God is saying to approve of our son wearing his hair long or our daughter wearing her hair short like a man's hair length.

Webster defines effeminate like this: "having traits, tastes, habits, etc., traditionally considered feminine, as softness or delicacy." Men, do you want to look like a woman? Do you want to be effeminate? Do you want to look like a sissy? When you allow your hair to grow long or wear the so-called man buns you begin to blur the distinction among the sexes, push the unisex lifestyle,



and send a message of defiance to God's Genesis order of male leadership and female submission.

Lange comments in this way:

"Accordingly, in contrast with the practices of a cruder heathenism of the earlier time, when long hair prevailed, there has grown up among the most civilized nations, that good taste which declares itself in favor of short hair for men and long hair for women. Among men, the wearing of long hair is now reprobated as a mark of effeminacy and dishonoring to them, in as much as it prevents the free exposure of the countenance."

Parents, I would I give you some practical advice. Start early when it comes to giving your son haircuts, and keep his hair short, even when he is a younger boy. Many mothers have been embarrassed over the years when another mother comes up to her and says, "My what a nice little girl you have." The problem is that her little girl was actually a little boy who had his hair long like a little girl. Mothers should be embarrassed for not keeping their little boys looking like little boys.

Teaching your son discipline in this area is important. Proverbs 23:23 says, "Buy the truth, and sell *it* not; *also* wisdom, and instruction, and understanding." When a man learns this lesson early in life, he will receive wisdom and instruction that will last a lifetime. Furthermore, if a young man will learn the importance of expressing Biblical masculinity, he will set a good example for his children and the next generation. He will also grow up using his hair as a sign of obedience to God's order instead of rebellion against the Lord.

How Long is Long?



Once again, the question always surfaces: "How long is long?" The Bible does not give any specific measurements how long a man's hair should be but it does teach that there should be a clear and obvious difference between the length of a man's hair and the length of a woman's hair. Men, why walk close to the line on this matter. Why not represent masculinity in

the best possible light? This should be your goal within your Christian life and as you present Biblical manhood.

So, did Jesus have long hair? The answer depends on what is meant by "long." Could it have been longer than the typical hair length of men today? Possibly. Would it have been so long that it appeared feminine? No. Regardless of the culture and different hairstyles that change there should be a clear distinction between the hair length of men and women. If hair is long enough to resemble the hair of a woman, it is too long. Also, if a woman's hair is short enough to be like the hair of the man it is too short. The difference in appearance must be short enough to prevent shame to the man and long enough to prevent shame to the woman. Christian ladies must do their part by keeping their hair reasonably long while men keep their hair reasonably short. To blur this distinction is to defy the orderly arrangement of God's design for male and female. It also dishonors God and does not glorify Him (1 Cor. 11:3, 4, 7).

1 Corinthians 10:31

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

What about a man's hair length? How long is long? My answer to this question is simple. If you've got to ask, it's too long! One man said, "When I got saved, I had long hair. At that time, my long hair was very important. I mean, very important! I don't believe I would have cut my hair for \$1000! But after a few months of reading my Bible, fellowshiping with the Lord and other Christians — I went to the barber shop and got a haircut! I mean a real haircut that I had not had in many years. It wasn't easy! But I remember coming home and looking in the mirror. I felt wonderful! I felt clean! I can honestly say, that cutting my long hair was one of the greatest victories of my Christian life! I had put so much importance on my long hair. After it was cut, I realized how silly and rebellious I was to let something like the length of my hair to be an act of disobedience to the Word of God."

You may conclude, "There are more important things to talk about than a man's hair length." Yes, I suppose there is. I could talk about the Gospel and

the salvation of souls. But isn't sanctification in our Christian lives also important?

1 Thessalonians 4:4

"That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour."

The vessel refers to our body and part of our sanctification is linked to the way we look and act. You say, "Preacher, I think my heart is right even though my hair length is not. After all, God looks at the heart (1 Sam. 16:7). Yes, this is true, but God also looks at your head! God also looks at your obedience to His commands and your sanctified manner of living. God is pleased with obedience (1 John 3:22). We are not only to change inwardly but outwardly (2 Cor. 7:1) since this normally reflects the condition of the inward heart. Peter mentioned the importance about the inner man (1 Pet. 3:4) but at the same time spoke about the outward man (1 Pet. 3:3). This should tell us that both are important to God and the one (the inner man) will affect the other (the outer man or outward appearance).

Again, I would agree that the length of one's hair is not as important as many other things such as salvation, the sanctity of life, and the sharing of our faith. But if hair lengths were not important to God, then why does He mention the significance of shorter hair on men and longer hair on women when looking back to His creative order and design? If something is a sign of the sexes, if something is related to Biblical manhood and masculinity (1 Cor. 11:14-15), if something is a sign of a man's leadership in the home, and if something represents a man's submission to Christ's headship (1 Cor. 11:3), then it must have importance in the Christian life. The fact of the matter is this. It has great importance. The message of our hair sends the message of our rebellion or acceptance of God's order for the sexes.

Do You Need a Haircut?

One man tells us why he cut his hair short: He entitled his little article, "WHY I CUT MY LONG WOMANISH HAIR." He said, "Standing on this passage (1 Cor. 11:14), I can say without fear of displeasing the Lord that a woman has no more authority to wear her hair short than I have to wear

my hair long. In the summer of 1973 I was a long-haired man. I had been in jail, had hitch-hiked more than 6,000 miles across the entire length of America. My hair was long because I was a rebel. When the Lord saved me that summer, I began to have a new attitude! I knew instinctively that my long womanish hair was improper, so I had it cut--but not too short! I decided to try a 'happy medium,' not really long, not really short. I reasoned that I didn't want to 'turn off' my old hippie friends I was trying to win to the Lord by causing them to think I had turned COMPLETELY weird.

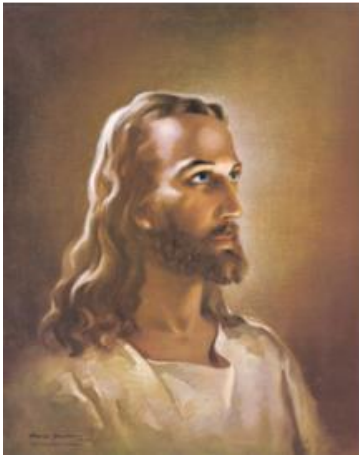
"I wanted to remain somewhat fashionable. Is that so unreasonable, I thought. I remained in that condition for a few weeks, then one evening I went soul winning with a brother who was older in the Lord and who was discipling me. We were invited into the home of an elderly lady in Bartow, Florida (in the center of the state), and the other brother began to witness to her about trusting Jesus Christ as her Savior. She was quiet for a few moments, then turned to me and said, 'I will not listen to you fellows preach the Bible to me when one of you has that old long hair which the Bible forbids.' I was momentarily dumb-struck, but regaining my composure, I apologized to the woman and told her that I would go to the barber the very next day and have it cut properly AND UNQUESTIONABLY short. And that is exactly what I did. It was a happy day. No more compromise with the issue. No more 'beating around the bush.' No more excuse making. No more defensiveness. If I remember correctly, I was less than four months old in the Lord, and I am thankful for the lady's boldness."



Did Jesus Have Long Hair?

The argument today that Jesus had long hair is often tainted by the assumption that the paintings of Christ that came out of the Renaissance of the 1400's and 1500's have some sort of authority. They do not. This Jesus was portrayed with European features and feminine eyes in addition to the

long feminine hair. But this is the Jesus of their imagination. It is not the Jesus of the Bible. It should be noted that there are no descriptive statements of the appearance of Jesus Christ in the Bible that would tell us the length of His hair. Any discussion of the matter must be based on Scriptural arguments and secondary arguments of historical facts.



I will never forget the time when my wife and I were walking through a development yard sale. I had gone on before her and walked into a garage to look at the items the people were selling. And there He was right before my eyes. It was a large portrait of Jesus staring at me. When I saw my wife, I told her that I had seen Jesus at one of the garage sales! Of course, the picture we have of Jesus today is simply an artist's perception of Jesus. This artist painted Jesus as some kind of effeminate, medieval hippie! But the artist who painted Jesus had no idea what Jesus looked like and the picture that many people have hanging in their homes today is simply not an accurate reflection of what Jesus looked like.

I'm glad we don't know what Jesus looked like because if we did man would probably worship pictures of Jesus. However, today many argue that Jesus had long hair, but this is simply not true. Those who want to promote long hair on men have always tried to justify their feminine looking hair by claiming that Jesus had long hair. However, this is simply not the true perception of Jesus.

Many artistic portrayals of Jesus are of a Caucasian male with blue eyes and long, light-brown hair. It is important to understand that this common portrayal is likely not at all what Jesus looked like. Jesus was ethnically Jewish, so He likely had light to dark brown skin, brown eyes, and dark brown or black hair. Jesus would have looked like a typical Middle Easterner. The Bible nowhere gives a physical description of Jesus, so no one should be dogmatic about His appearance. And, ultimately, we have to realize that what He looked like does not matter. If it mattered, the Bible would contain a physical description.

If the colors of His skin, eyes, and hair in artistic portrayals are likely inaccurate, what about the length of His hair? Is Jesus being portrayed as having long hair also inaccurate? Again, it is impossible to be dogmatic, since the Bible says nothing about the length of His hair. But, if Jesus looked like a typical Middle Eastern male in the 1st century A.D., the artistic portrayals are likely incorrect on the length of His hair as well.

Many of the artistic portrayals of Jesus show Him with hair that looks totally feminine. While there were no specific Jewish laws, Jewish men traditionally kept much shorter hair than Jewish women. In the Bible, there are not any verses describing Jesus' hair. However, there are verses that describe how Jewish men were to take care of their hair according to Biblical Law. Based on these verses, it is likely that Jesus had neatly trimmed black hair, long sideburns, and a beard.

In Leviticus, God gave his people specific instructions that proscribed how priests and individual men in the community were to take care of their beards and hair. Even today, these passages influence Orthodox Jewish men in how they wear their hair and trim their beards (Lev. 19:27). Additional instructions were given to priests regarding the matter of their hair (Lev. 21:5) and Jesus is our High Priest today (Heb. 4:14). The prophet Ezekiel also described the Temple priest's hair as being trimmed (Ezek. 44:24).

Jesus was faithful in following the Law given to Moses which means He surely did not have long hair (Matt. 5:17). Historically, artists have depicted Jesus with both long-flowing hair, but these images do not match God's Old Testament and Jewish commands regarding hairstyles. Since Jesus followed the Law, He would have had neatly trimmed hair with long sideburns. Scholars believe that among the Hebrews, it was regarded as disgraceful for a man to wear his hair long, except he had a vow as a Nazarite (Numbers 6:5). We will talk about this later.

It's interesting that the oldest representations going back to the first Christian centuries and found chiefly in the catacombs of Rome all pictured Jesus without long hair. Early pictures did not show Jesus with long hair. Of course, these were not accurate or precise pictures of Jesus, but they do demonstrate that people knew that Jesus would never defy God's design

for short hair on men. These pictures were also closer to the days of Jesus and would more accurately reflect the styles of the days of Jesus. The custom in the days of the Romans was for men to wear short hair.

All the pictures of Christ down to the beginning of the first century and even later are of the same kind. Jesus was seen to have short hair. Students of the first century and of Roman history are aware that during the time of Christ men wore their hair short. Any person can see pictures of coins and statues which bear the likenesses of emperors who reigned during and after the time of Christ. Such likenesses reveal that Caesars and other rulers and emperors had short hair, and of course, the subjects followed the example set by the emperor.

Two excellent books that one may reference are *A History of the Holy Land* (Michael Avi-Yonah, editor) and *Daniel to Paul* (Gaalyahu Cornfeld, editor). On pages 126-127 of the former, you will find pictures of the busts of Roman leaders, such as Augustus, Pompey, and one believed to be Herod. Each one has short hair. As a matter of fact, all the carvings and statues of the Roman legionnaires show them as having closely cropped hair. It would have been quite an oddity for a Roman man to wear his hair long. It used to be the same for all men in our society. The reality is that before, during, and after the time of Christ every Roman emperor from Julius Caesar to Trajan had short hair. And it was the emperor who set the pattern in style and mode of dress for the entire empire.

Philip Vollmer states, "Archaeologists object to the conventional pictures of Christ because they are not true to history." He then says, "Several pictures of busts of numerous Roman emperors during and after the time of Christ--General Pompey, the Emperor Trajan, Julius Caesar, Caesar Augustus and King Herod Agrippa the First of Judaea, a Jew by religion, who ruled shortly after the time of Christ--all show the men to have short hair. These men set the example and the pace for men during the time of Christ" (Philip Vollmer, *The Modern Student's Life of Christ*, pp. 286). From coins, statues, and paintings that depict men in the Greco-Roman world of the first century, we know that men trimmed their hair.

The Jews also followed the same custom of short hair on men. History reveals this as being true. Non-Christians also verify this as being accurate.

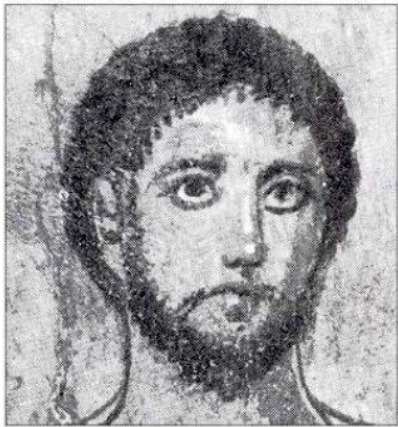
A February 24, 2004, Associated Press article reports: "Jesus didn't have long hair," said physical anthropologist Joe Zias, who has studied hundreds of skeletons found in archaeological digs in Jerusalem. "Jewish men back in antiquity did not have long hair."

"Along with extensive writings from the period, experts also point to a frieze on Rome's Arch of Titus, erected after Jerusalem was captured in AD 70 to celebrate the victory, which shows Jewish men with short hair taken into captivity" (ibid.).

The Hellenistic Greek culture dominated the Eastern Mediterranean area influencing Judea before the Romans came on the scene. Quite a large segment of the Jewish population spoke the Greek language and had a Hellenistic view in the time of Christ (Notice John 12:20; Acts 6:1). The style of hair for men of this culture was to wear it short. There are pictures of this Hellenistic era showing marble statuette of unidentified men wearing their hair short. The close contacts between the Jewish and Hellenistic civilizations in thought, art, and everyday life demonstrate that both wore their hair similarly short. Whether Jewish or Gentile, the statues of this era evoke the custom of the age and environment. Learned historians and archaeologists repeatedly tell us that both Roman and Jewish hair length consisted of short hair on men. Antiquity does not lie.

Some argue that those Jews who did not have a Hellenistic view may have worn their hair long. However, in the anti-Hellenistic Jewish Talmud is the instruction that every thirty days all the priests should have well-trimmed haircuts. Why this instruction if they grew their hair long? These priests were well aware of Ezekiel 44:20: "Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long." God intended that the priests set the example for the rest of the community (Mal. 2:7). Further examination of the Talmud reveals that the hairstyle was Julian, or what would be called a Caesar cut (*Sanhedrin* 22b). We must also remember that Jesus was a priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 7:11) and Jewish priests wore their hair short. Therefore, it is likely that Jesus would seek to follow this example to illustrate His typical fulfillment of the priesthood position (Heb. 7:25).

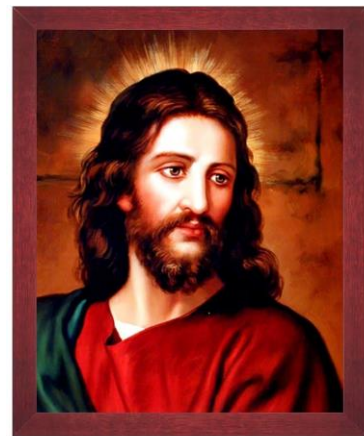
Let's face it, Jesus looked like other Jewish males of the time. If He would have had anything really unique about Himself, it is likely it would have been mentioned somewhere in the Biblical narratives. The Bible says that Jesus did not stand out from the crowds in His appearance for Isaiah 54:2 states: "he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." As a matter of fact, the Pharisees have to pay 30 pieces of silver to Judas for him to identify who Jesus was.



This also is not a picture of Jesus but would be more reflective of what Jesus looked like when blending into society and portraying manhood. However, both the Roman and Jewish short hair lengths on men were an accepted customary practice during the days of Jesus based upon the ordered distinction that was passed down through the ages of time and it was also the result of the inward instinct placed within men by God (1 Cor. 11:14). A man's hair was always to be shorter than a woman's hair length. Men know this intuitively and that is why those cultures that have not abandoned the inward light of revelation concerning masculinity all promote a shorter hair length on men.

What About the Painting of Jesus?

As previously mentioned, almost all artists renderings portray Jesus with long hair, soft, feminine, if not effeminate features, and a sentimental, sanctimonious look in His eyes. They bear no similarity in any way to what Christ really looked like. They are simply the figment of a man's imagination. They are the product of mental invention and theory but there is no truth or validity to these pictures.



Jesus Christ did not look like the picture that you may have hanging on your wall in your home. If it were important for us to know exactly what He

looked like as a man, it would have been recorded. In fact, nowhere in God's Word are we told to be concerned with what Christ looked like *as a human being*. The only description we are given is this: "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him" (Isaiah 53:2). This verse tells us that Jesus was a common man. He did not stand out above the throngs of people as some kind of middle-aged hippie.

We don't know who the artist was that painted the popular picture of Jesus. However, we do know that the artist's conception and painting of Jesus, as a longhaired man, was an attempt to make Jesus different from most men in his day, whether Roman or Jewish. The present-day pictures of Jesus are merely an artist's conception of what he thought Jesus would look like. Painting Jesus with long hair was a way to make Jesus stand out and be different than the rest of the human population of His day. However, the painting of Jesus is misleading. Jesus would not seek to be physically different in appearance from the Jewish men or the Roman men of his own day and go against God's design for the distinction among the sexes. Actually, the Bible tells us that Jesus did not look any different than the Roman or Jewish people of His day.

Jesus would have looked like any other Jewish man of His time. He would have been a normal, healthy, masculine-looking man. As a carpenter, He spent most of His life working outdoors (Mark 6:3). He did *not* look like an effeminate weakling with long hair! Christ had short hair, like a man should have. And it would have been neatly trimmed and kept. As the Son of God, Jesus always set the right example. On a number of occasions Jesus was able to blend into a crowd because He looked just like everyone else (Luke 4:30; John 8:59; 10:39). Think! If Jesus had had long hair, contrary to the accepted style of the time, it would not have been necessary for Judas to use a special sign and kiss to point Christ out to His enemies (Mark 14:44).

The plain simple truth is this. During the earthly ministry of Christ, short hair was the only acceptable style. Had Jesus been somewhat different, as a longhaired freak, Judas could have simply told the soldiers that Jesus was the man with the long hair. Christ would have stood out from the crowds if

He had long flowing hair like the artist portrayed him. Throughout the Gospel books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John people made no mention that Jesus looked any different than the average person. If anything, people wondered how such an ordinary-looking Jewish man could be the Savior (Isa. 53:2).

John the Baptist would not have known that his cousin was the Savior (their mothers, Mary and Elizabeth were related) unless an angel had told him just before Jesus' baptism at age 30 (John 1:33). The mob that came to arrest Him could not tell Him apart from Peter or John or any of the others. As mentioned above Judas Iscariot had to actually point Him out (Matthew 26:47-49). Then too, Jesus had to identify Himself, twice, to those who demanded Him by name, even when He stood right in front of them in the bright light of their torches (John 18:3-9). The Lord Jesus was not any different in His appearance than the average Jew or Roman. If Jesus had long hair like the artists picture presents Him then everyone would have known who He was. No questions would have been asked.

Jesus did hard outside physical labor (Matt. 13:55) with Joseph in Nazareth until He was about 30 years old. During the days of Jesus, the building trade involved very strenuous physical labor with heavy stone and lumber, without any sort of power tools or mechanical digging equipment that is in use today. Many religious pictures that portray Jesus as a pale, skinny, effeminate man with long hair and wearing a flowing white or pink robe are simply far fetched. His appearance would definitely have been that of a tanned, muscular, physically fit young man dressed in durable and practical clothing, which made Him indistinguishable from the "blue-collar" worker.

So the fact that an artist drew Jesus with long flowing hair like a woman was an attempt to make Jesus stand out from other men. Isn't it strange that artist portrayals of the apostles typically depict them with short hair whereas their Master looks like an effeminate hippy? It is more than strange; it is ungodly! During Jesus' day and thereafter it was considered so much a mark of effeminacy for men to wear long hair that it was not only ridiculed by the Roman poet Juvenal, but later times seriously censured by church councils. Long hair was a sign of effeminacy and even homosexuality.

1 Corinthians 11:14-15 again states:

“Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have (*wear*) long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering.”



Paul reveals that the long hair of a woman is a natural covering for her. Long hair was a woman’s glory because it gave visible expression to the differentiation of the sexes. This was Paul’s point in noting that long hair was given to her as a covering. The word “glory” in this context suggests that which is filled with honor, spender, beauty, dignity, and excellence like the sun and moon (it speaks well of her). The long hair of a woman represents all these things as she lives in submission to her husband and naturally displays her Biblical womanhood before

others. This is the teaching of nature itself. Ladies, your glory is in your hair.

Matthew Henry commented:

"The woman's hair is a natural covering; to wear it long is a glory to her; but for a man to have long hair, or cherish it, is a token of softness and effeminacy."

Matthew A Vogan and Keith M Watkins again write:

“Remember that the “woman in the city, which was a sinner” (Luke 7:37) had more than enough to be ashamed of, on account of the many sins of her past disreputable life. But when her contrition, thankfulness and love overflowed that day in the Pharisee’s house, she had nothing to be ashamed of. On the contrary, it was her glory to express her devotion to her Saviour, through whom she was forgiven so much, in the way that she did.

“What was it that she did? She “stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment” (Luke

7:38). It was her glory, not only to have enough tears of godly sorrow to wash her Saviour's feet, not only to have enough love to kiss those blessed feet, not only to bestow her costly ointment upon them, but also to have hair that was long enough to be able to "wipe them with the hairs of her head."

A woman's hair is her glory (dignity, honor, and beauty) for it represents her submission to male authority and follows the nature of things that God established between male and female. Yes, it is an outward sign of female dignity and beauty. It is a distinguishing mark of Biblical womanhood. Think about this. Women of the world can keep their hair longer for the sake of culture and nature, in some of the driest and poorest circumstances, like rural India. Surely then Christian women of grace can keep their hair longer, for Scripture's sake (in obedience to Scripture), however difficult their circumstances may be.

When it comes to short hair on men and long hair on women, the Bible teaches that there is no other apostolic ruling or custom. Since Scripture is clear, the church should be clear about this practice. "If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God" (1 Cor. 11:16). Those who would depart from the clear teaching of the apostle and seek to undermine it are being contentious. They are dividing their fellow believers from the requirements of God's Word and from other believers. Paul gives "ordinances" (verse 2) by the authority of God, which are based on the authority of God's Word, but the Corinthians would rather have their own "custom."

The people of Corinth were seeking to replace the commandment of God with man's "custom" or cultural norm. Today some Christians conclude that the apostle is simply reflecting the cultural norms and attitudes of his day and that these do not apply now. They think that they are free to substitute one set of human norms for another. However, this is not the case. Paul is arguing from creation and natural order regarding hair lengths – not local customs. Furthermore, it is an act of rebellion against God's Word and against nature itself to refuse to comply to God's command on this issue of hair lengths.

In the seventeenth century, John Trapp wrote on verses 14 and 15:
“Methinks our monstrous fashionists, both male and female, the one for nourishing their horrid bushes of vanity, the other for their most unnatural and cursed cutting their hair, should every hour fear and tremble. . . . It is a vile thing to go against nature.”

In the eighteenth century, John Gill wrote in his commentary on verse 6:
“But if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven: as it is accounted in all civilized nations: the very Heathens speak of it as a thing abominable, and of which there should not be one single dreadful example.”

How shocked the godly of the past would be if they could see what is happening in our churches today! The moral laxities introduced in the twentieth century have wrought havoc in the church in western society. Women and girls with short hair are just one part of the general blurring of gender distinctions.

1 Corinthians 11:16 again concludes: “If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.” God has made length of hair a church issue, He has not left it to be a matter for an individual’s conscience. True liberty is to be set free by Christ to do the will of Christ – not our own will (John 8:32, 36).

Vogan and Watkins conclude:

“As the years go by, the standards of the world and most of the visible church too continue to fall further and further. But the Bible does not change. ‘The word of the Lord endureth for ever’ (1 Pet. 1:25). Surely the Lord’s people everywhere ought to agree on long hair for women and short hair for men, for the character of true grace described in Psalm 119:128 is found in them all: ‘Therefore I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.’”

What About Absalom and Elijah?

The only longhaired person other than a Nazarite mentioned in the Bible was Absalom, a son of David. This man rebelled against his father. It was Absalom who started a revolution. It is worth noting that even in Bible days

rebellion, revolution, disobedience to parents, and long hair were associated. Such was the case with Absalom. Long hair has always been associated with rebellion. Some would argue against this due to what the Scripture says about Absalom's appearance. Those who promote long hair on men suggest that the people looked upon Absalom's long hair with favor.

For instance, in 2 Samuel 14:25-26 Absalom's long hair was said to be praised for its handsome appearance and nowhere is it ever referred to as being shameful. "But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled *it*: because *the hair* was heavy on him, therefore he polled it:) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight."

Some make more out of this verse than is necessary. Any Bible student would immediately recognize and understand that this is simply the historian's recognition of Absalom's beauty before the people and not an endorsement for the length of his hair. Not all the statements in the Bible are verses that are designed to teach us how to live. Many verses are simply historical passages that are recorded in the Bible which are designed to give us information about events that took place (Gen. 3:5). Men, if you want to have hair like Absalom you will have to let your hair grow to the weight of about five pounds! 1 Corinthians 11:14 clearly states that it is disgraceful for a man to have long hair. This is the Biblical teaching.

Others also suggest that in 2 Kings 1:8 the messenger's description of a man with long hair and a leather girdle caused the king to instantly realize it was the prophet Elijah. It's reasoned that Elijah must have had long hair and this would also indicate God's endorsement of long hair on men. However, Elijah was a "hairy man" not because he had long hair but because he wore the traditional hairy garment (probably made from goat's dark hair) that was part of the dress of prophets at this time. The expression "hairy man" connotes the



wearing of his hairy garment that was held together with a belt (“girt with a girdle of leather”).

The prophet’s cloth was woven from hair. It was as rough as burlap and sometimes called sackcloth. Since sackcloth symbolized distress or self-affliction (6:30; Gen. 37:34; 2 Sam. 3:31), Elijah’s garb visualized the repentance to which the prophets called the people (Neh. 9:1; Jer. 6:26). Ahaziah recognized his messengers’ description of Elijah immediately. It was not long hair that he noticed but his hairy garb, which he wore as a prophet. There is no evidence that Elijah had long hair.

One verse of special interest is found in Leviticus 19:27 which commands the Jews, "Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard." This command is given in context of special observances connected with astrology or funerals. However, that does not mean that it had no application for daily living. The Jews believe that this command has to do with the shaving of the temples of the head, a practice once connected with idolatry. However, the verse was probably an injunction against the shaving of the entire head for purposes of idolatry.

It also relates to the marring of the corners of the beard. We know the importance of the beards to the Jews because of the shame of those who had half their beards shaved off and the instructions from David that these men tarry in Jericho until their beards grew back (2 Samuel 10:4-5). If their beards were not important, then why not just shave them off entirely and return to Jerusalem? But if they took their beards so seriously, then they probably took the shaving of their heads just as seriously. An exception was made for the Nazarite who ended his vow with the shaving of his head (Numbers 6:18-19).

Jesus - Nazarite or Nazarene?



The Biblical narratives of Samson, Absalom, and the Nazarites show us that the wearing of long hair on men was different enough that special

mention was made of the fact. These revelations do not stress that this was a normal but abnormal practice. In other words, it was very different than what was normal excepted within society. So, the Scriptural instructions for the Nazarites to grow their hair long was something unique and not normally done. In fact, the Greco-Roman male gods Serapis and Apollo were frequently depicted with long hair because it distinguished them from ordinary men, who typically wore short hair.

Since it is generally believed that a Nazarite had to let his hair grow long and since Jesus was from Nazareth there are many who mistakenly identify Him as a Nazarite who wore His hair long. However, there is no such Scriptural evidence. Jesus was a "Nazarene" because He was from Nazareth, but He was not a "Nazarite." So, when Matthew and others call Jesus a Nazarene, they are not referring to His Nazarite vow, but to the recognized place of His boyhood days or where he grew up. Jesus was not a Nazarite so He would not follow the Nazarite vow which forbid the cutting of hair for a period of time.

Jesus was actually a Nazarene who came from the city of Nazareth (Matt. 2:23; Mark 14:67; John 1:46; Acts 10:38) but this in no way means he followed the Nazarite vow. This is a false assumption given by many people. The Bible says in John 19:19 that "Pilate wrote a title, and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS." Please notice that the inscription on the cross was Jesus the Nazarene and not Jesus the Nazarite.

Those who seem to think that Jesus had long hair because He was a life-long Nazarite like John the Baptist are mistaken. We know Jesus was not a life-long Nazarite because a Nazarite could not eat grapes, drink grape juice, or eat anything made of the vine. Numbers 6:2-4 says, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate *themselves* to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate *themselves* unto the LORD: He shall separate *himself* from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk."

Our Lord could not have been a life-long Nazarite with long hair. One reason was because he observed the last Passover in Luke 22:14-18, "And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide *it* among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come."

The Passover was characterized by the fresh fruit of the vine, and as a Nazarite our Lord would not have been allowed to partake of the Passover. He also partook of the fruit of the vine when he instituted the Lord's Supper. Luke 22:19, 20 states, "And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." No Nazarite who made a vow for life would do this.

Likewise, a Nazarite could not touch a dead body. Numbers 6:6 says, "All the days that he separateth *himself* unto the LORD he shall come at no dead body." When our Lord raised the daughter of Jairus in Mark 5:41, the Bible says, "And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise." Then He also touched the bier which contained a dead man's body in Luke 7:12-15. "Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare *him* stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother." Again, if Jesus wore His hair long because He was a life-long Nazarite, He would not touch any dead bodies.

Since the practicing Nazarite could not touch the fruit of the vine or touch a dead body, and since our Lord did both, we must arrive at the definite

conclusion that He was not a Nazarite. Jesus was a Nazarene but not a Nazarite. There is a difference!

Here is something else to reflect upon. Unless Jesus was committed to a lifetime Nazarite vow (which He was not), He would cut His hair after His time of special separation. In Numbers 6:5 and 13 we read, "All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth *himself* unto the LORD, he shall be holy, *and* shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow" (Numb. 6:5). "And this *is* the law of the Nazarite, when the days of his separation are fulfilled: he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation" (Numb. 6:13). Then, after these "days" were over the Nazarite was commanded to shave his head. Numbers 6:18, "And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put *it* in the fire which *is* under the sacrifice of the peace offerings."

So the Nazarite not cutting his hair during the time of his vow, which for him was not shameful, does not undermine the naturalness of cutting his hair ordinarily. The elaborate ceremony for cutting his hair at the end of his vow, including throwing it under the sacrifice (Num. 6:18), emphasizes the altogether unusual state of the Nazarite's hair. Of course, this argument of the Nazarite cutting the hair is not necessary for Jesus was not a Nazarite but a Nazarene. But it does prove a point of interest when studying the true background of the Nazarite vow. It must also be observed that the Nazarite grew his hair longer as a sign that his whole body and life were dedicated to God. His long hair became an emblem of his personal devotion to God (Numb. 6:1-5; Judges 13:5; 1 Sam. 1:11). This is not the same attitude that men possess today when they decide to grow their hair long and appear feminine in appearance. Long hair on men no longer has this meaning or significance attached to it as it did under the Nazarite vow. It was temporary, portrayed a specific message of dedication to God, and then it ended. The hair was cut.

Today long hair on men sends the opposite message. Long hair on men is a sign that represents rebellion in our society and rebellion to God's

established pattern of order among the sexes (1 Cor. 11:3). This alone should rule out long hair on men for today (1 Thess. 5:22). Again, it must be observed that long hair on men was not the norm, and this is why the Nazarite could stand out as being different than the average man. Furthermore, it must be recognized that the Nazarite did not keep his hair long. He shaved his hair off and dedicated it to God (Lev. 6:18). Most Nazarites took a vow for 100 days or less.

The Jewish Mishna states that a Nazirite vow could last as long as 100 days, but the usual length was thirty days. We must remember that this was a vow - not a way of life. In some rare cases, people were Nazirites for life such as Samuel, Samson, John the Baptist. In reply to these findings, we can rightly conclude that the Nazarites *were* singled out in their appearance to indicate God's special dealings and purposes with them. As previously mentioned, the fact that the Nazarite could be singled out, as being different, would lead us to believe that long hair on men was not a normal or accepted practice in society.

The long hair on Nazarites sent a message to the people that they were fully dedicated to God in a special way. However, the Nazarite vow and long hair on these Jewish men would never upset God's normal preference and desire for men to wear hair short, a hair length that is unlike a woman's hair length (1 Cor. 11:14). Lastly, if you want to be a Nazarite today like John the Baptist you might also consider reading how John the Baptizer walked through the wilderness eating locusts and wild honey (Matt. 3:4)!

John Phillips again remarks:

"The custom of men wearing their hair short can be traced back at least as far as Moses, for under the Mosaic Law it was only in the rare case of the Nazarite that long hair was allowed to be worn by men. In that case it was not a mark of rebellion but of consecration. As soon as the period of the vow was over the Nazarite had to cut off his long hair and burn it. It was second nature, then, even in Paul's day, for a man to wear short hair. For a man to have long hair, he said, was a shame. It proclaimed the man to be without honor. It might even have been regarded as having more serious complications—a tendency toward effeminacy and serious moral problems."

We must also remember that others who let their hair grow long throughout their lives were very questionable in character, such as Samson (Judges 16:17) and Absalom (2 Sam. 15:6). Their hair certainly was not a sign of their dedication to God as was evidenced by their lives. The most famous Nazirite was Samson. Although no razor had touched his head since birth, his hair was fastened with "7 locks" (Judges 16:13-15). There is something interesting to note. The word "locks" is never used in the Bible with regard to a woman's hair. Only the Nazarites kept their hair in locks (Numb. 6:5). Locks were plaited ("interwoven") strands or ringlets of hair that were designed to demonstrate some kind of difference among the men who wore their hair long during this vow.



This means that distinction between a man and woman's hair was still important to God even when the Nazarites hair was long during his time of vow. To have long hair, except for religious purposes under the Mosaic Law, was shameful and not ordinary for men. Nevertheless, those who promote long hair on men suggest that God would not encourage long hair one place in the Bible and then in another place condemn it. They claim this is contradictory. Therefore, since the Nazarites had long hair and were never condemned for having it, then men have the right to wear their hair long even today.

There are several fatal flaws to this line of reasoning. First, you need to be a *Jewish* person to qualify for the long hair associated with the Nazarite vow. Is that true of you?

Second, you need to grow your hair long for religious purposes. I don't think that men who wear their hair long today do it for religious related purposes. Instead, they wear their hair long for other reasons, such as cultural and rebellious reasons.

Third, you need to cut your hair after thirty or one hundred days. If you want to be a Nazarite, you must follow the laws. Remember that the Nazarite was forbidden to do many other things under the Law such as eating grapes or touching dead people.

Fourth, if you want to follow the example of the men who were Nazarites for life then you can never cut your hair again! You must also wear it in locks!

Fifth, if you want to keep your hair long you will have to override the natural instinct that God has placed within you about long hair (1 Cor. 11:14) and reflect rebellion against God's order for men who are under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and representing headship or leadership in marriage (1 Cor. 11:3).

Sixth, in keeping your hair long you would have to rebel against the New Testament command that revoked the Old Testament procedure of Nazarite vows. You would have to place yourself under all the Mosaic Law, which involves sacrificing animals and following the sabbatical laws and intricate procedures of Old Testament Judaism. However, the Bible says that we are no longer living under the Mosaic Law (Rom. 6:14).

The Old or New Testament?



We must remember that the Nazarite vow under the Mosaic Law does not overrule the normal God-given pattern for the distinction among the sexes (1 Cor. 11:14) and how a man's hair was to be distinct from a woman's hair length (1 Cor. 11:15).

The Bible sets limits on that which is under the law and is culturally bound. The command of New Testament (1 Cor. 11:14) has revoked the Nazarite practice, which was part of the Old Testament Mosaic Law. This is an important hermeneutical point of Biblical interpretation.

McQuilkin has observed:

"All Scripture should be received as normative for every person in all societies of all time unless the Bible itself limits the audience."

In other words, when the Bible limits the audience to Jews living under the law (Nazirites), who were practicing Jewish vows, we cannot assume that this is an accepted practice for us today. If this were the case, we should assume that stoning (Lev. 20:11), bringing animal sacrifices (Lev. 1) and the observance of all the dietary and Sabbath laws should still be practiced for today (Lev. 11). But this is a false assumption (Col. 2:16).

The obvious dispensational point is this. The clear instruction in the New Testament revokes the Old Testament practice and, in this case, clarifies God's clear mind on the matter of sexual distinction (1 Cor. 11:14-15). When the Bible gives a clear command and nowhere else nullifies this command, it must then be accepted as the revealed will of God and a mandate to mold our personal and group behavior. The Bible is its own authority and can set limits on which practices are culture-bound, law-bound, New Testament-bound, and which ones are not.

What is Normal for Today?

We must look at all the Scriptures about hair length to determine what is NORMAL for today and what God would have us to follow and practice within our Christian lives. Sometimes Christians apply an experience, such as the Nazirite vow, to the day in which they live,

only to discover that God does not promote such a practice today (1 Cor. 11:14). Short hair reflects the man's submission to Jesus Christ while longer hair connotes the woman's submission to man (1 Cor. 11:3).

Robert McQuilkin again correctly observes:

"That an event was reported to have truly happened does not necessarily make it a revelation of God's universal will."



One way we can determine which commands are to be repeated or observed for today is by examining where the command or situation is given and if it is repeated elsewhere in Scripture in a similar way. If it is given under the Mosaic Law, and not repeated in any fashion for New Testament living, then we can be sure that it is no longer to be observed.

Likewise, if it's mentioned in the New Testament epistles, we can be sure that it is for New Testament Christianity. Since in the New Testament God commands a distinction among the sexes regarding hair lengths it must be observed. *Nothing written in the Old Testament about Nazarite vows or Samson's hair would overturn God's clear revelation of the New Testament Scriptures.* Men, stop fooling yourself. If you want to keep your hair long, you are rebelling against God.

So does God contradict Himself concerning the message of long hair on men? No. According to God's revelation in the Old Testament long hair on men, except for rare religious purposes, was shameful to men. God simply has allowed some variation in His plan and purpose for men within the Nazarite vow under the Mosaic Law to illustrate a man's dedication to God. God allowed the hair on men to have a *typical lesson* for a specific time under Jewish Law. It was a sign of dedication and absolute surrender to God. However, the *typical teaching* is no longer valid since we are not under Law (Rom. 6:14) and since we are told to dedicate ourselves to God (Rom. 12:1-2) without rituals and typical lessons. We no longer live in the day of rituals and symbols (Heb. 6:1).

In short, the true and lasting outward expression for Biblical manhood will never change. A man is to have short hair (1 Cor. 11:14). This is God's clear and unmistakable truth that He presents to the churches for today. There can be no misunderstanding about what God is saying unless a person wants to try and find loopholes in God's plan for men to promote his own rebellious ways. The man's hair is to be short to signify his headship under Christ (1 Cor. 11:3) and the distinction among the sexes (1 Cor. 11:14-15), which reflects the spiritual order that God ordained in Genesis.

There are two simple principles to remember about long hair on men.

1. Counteract culture when necessary.

The Christian must refuse to follow the culture when it tries to openly and defiantly blur established patterns of distinction among the sexes. As Christians we must *counteract* the culture that unites the sexes (Romans 12:2). Don't become a gender bender! Don't change with cultural expressions when sexual distinction is in question. If it's doubtful (Rom.

14:23), then it's dirty and is breaking down the cultural distinction among the sexes. Don't follow the trends and appearances that are distorting the roles and sexual distinctions between men and women.

You might also ask yourself these questions: Do I look like a woman? What will others think of me when I wear long hair? Will it harm my testimony for Christ (1 Tim. 4:12 – “be thou and example of the believers”)? You might also ask yourself if long hair on men will offend other Christians in the work of God (Rom. 14:19-21)? Since our long hair is an act of rebellion against God and His order, since long hair on men is not a good Christian testimony, and since it can offend other believers, men should not hesitate to cut their hair and keep the sexual distinction clear.

2. Don't walk close to the line of compromise.

Some Christian men begin experimenting with longer hair to see how close to the line they can get while still being considered manlike in appearance. Of course, when your intent is to see how close to the line you can get, then you probably will eventually cross the line. Here is the point. Every Christian man should dress and look like a man in the best possible light. Don't remove the old landmarks (Prov. 23:10) and the long-established differences between the sexes. Stay within the boundaries and don't walk so close to the edge. You might fall off!

When someone looks at you from the back, they should be able to tell *what* you are! When they look at you from the front there should be no doubt that you possess distinguishing marks of masculinity. Again, don't become a gender bender. Don't follow the trends and appearances that are distorting the roles of men. Do you look more like a man or more like a woman by the way you dress and present yourself? This is the ultimate question.

Let's conclude our study with some straightforward statements. Why shouldn't a man wear his hair long?

- Because the Bible says it's a shame for a man to have long hair (1 Cor. 11:14). The Bible tells us that long hair is unnatural and degrading for a man. God said it, I believe it, and that settles it with me! As a

Christian we should seek to obey what God's Word tells us to do. Don't walk the line and see how close you can live to rebellion and questionable activities.

- Because long hair is a sign of rebellion against God's order for the sexes, the family order, and man's spiritual head (Jesus Christ) – 1 Cor. 11:3, 14-15.
- Because long hair is a symbol that reflects rebellion to the established order of righteous living within a society.

1 Samuel 15:23 declares:

"For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry."

- Because we don't want to identify (associate) with those movements and men within society (rock stars and movies stars) that represent rebellion against God, truth, and order.

1 Thessalonians 5:22

"Abstain from all appearance (every form) of evil."

The manner in which we present ourselves is very important. This speaks of both the sin and appearance of sin in our lives. In other words, we should directly avoid every sin (including long hair on men) and not present ourselves in a manner that would link us with rebellion.

- Because we don't want to participate with the rebellious sins of other men by endorsing their sinful lifestyles in our own lives.

1 Timothy 5:22

"Neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure."

Ephesians 5:11

"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*."

- Because Jesus did not wear his hair long. Both the Bible, historical records, Roman culture, and Jewish culture validate this. Facts are stubborn things! We should want to be like Jesus and do those things that are pleasing to the Father.

John 8:29

“For I do always those things that please him.”

- Because Jesus was not a Nazarite, and neither are you. Furthermore, Nazarites did cut their hair and while it was long, they attempted to wear it differently to make a distinction among a woman’s hair.

Romans 6:14 says,

“For ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

- Because we are to be a testimony of light to those around us!

Matthew 5:16

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

- Because you don’t want to live in a fool’s paradise!

1 Samuel 26:21

“Behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.”

Proverbs 9:6

“Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.”

Men, we need to have a Christian attitude toward the short male hairstyle. As men we should follow the admonition of the Scripture and have short hair. It should be short enough to send the message that we are opposed to the revolutionary and rebellious symbol of long hair on men. We should make the decision to wear our hair short if we are men that care what the Bible says and Christians who want to be obedient to God’s truth. Men, God commands you to look like a man – not a woman.

True Biblical manhood should be maintained in your life. As Christian men don't try and mimic the rebellion of our present generation by the way that you maintain your hair. Keep your hair cut shorter so that there can be no question about your obedience and testimony. Stop deceiving yourself! Jesus did not have long hair. Jesus would never reflect rebellion in His life. Why don't you go and get a haircut today if you are portraying a questionable testimony.

Without wanting to be redundant, allow me to reiterate something as I finish this study. Make sure that you cut your hair short enough to represent masculinity in the best possible light. Don't live on the borders of compromise with God's natural law that He established in Genesis, and which is built into human conscience and society. Don't buck the nature of things. Jesus did not have long hair. So be like Jesus!

"Be like Jesus this my song,
In the home and in the throng.
Be like Jesus all day long,
I would be like Jesus."